

## Important Monthly Current Affairs Capsule – December 2021

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## CURRENT AFFAIRS: IMPORTANT DAYS

### World AIDS Day -Dec 1

- World AIDS Day is observed across the world on **1st December** every year.
- This year the theme of **World AIDS Day** is **End inequalities. End AIDS and End Pandemics**.
- The day provides an opportunity for people worldwide to unite in the fight against HIV, to show support for people living with HIV and to commemorate those who have died from an AIDS-related illness.
- With a special focus on reaching people left behind, WHO and its partners are highlighting the growing inequalities in access to essential HIV services.
- **The day was first marked in 1988** and was also the first-ever international day for global health. **Acquired immunodeficiency syndrome (AIDS)** is a chronic disease that is caused by the human immunodeficiency virus (HIV).

### 57th Border Security Force (BSF) Raising Day Celebrated on December 01, 2021

- The **Border Security Force (BSF)** is observing its **57th Raising Day** on 01 December 2021.
- The Border Security Force (BSF), India's central armed police force, was established on **December 1, 1965**.
- **Note:**
- The first Director-General of Border Security Force (BSF) was **K F Rustamji** IPS who served from July 21, 1965, to September 30, 1974.
- **Border Security Force Act - 1968**

### Arunachal Pradesh observe Indigenous Faith Day - December 1

- **Arunachal Pradesh** celebrated **1st December** as 'Indigenous Faith Day'
- This day is to **preserve and promote indigenous faith and traditional practices of tribal communities of the state**.
- The **Governor of Arunachal Pradesh Dr B D Mishra (Retd)** and **Chief Minister (CM) Pema Khandu** attended the celebration in **Itanagar**.
- Indigenous Faith Day is 1st celebrated on 1st December 2013 this is due to the birth anniversary of **Golgi Bote Talom Rukbo**, who is called as the **father of the indigenous faith**.

### International Day for the Abolition of Slavery Observed on 2 December 2021

- Every year, the **International Day for the Abolition of Slavery** is observed on **December 2** since 1986 by the **United Nations General Assembly**.
- Theme of 2021 International Day for the Abolition of Slavery is **Ending Slavery's Legacy of Racism: A Global Imperative for Justice**.

- **Aim:**
- To Eradicate the contemporary forms of slavery, such as trafficking in persons, sexual exploitation, the worst forms of child labour, forced marriage, and the forced recruitment of children for use in armed conflict.
- On the day of International Day for the Abolition of Slavery, **United Nations General Assembly** adopted the United Nations Convention for the Suppression of the Traffic in Persons and the Exploitation of the Prostitution of Others (**resolution 317(IV) of 2 December 1949**).
- As per the **International Labour Organisation (ILO)**, over 40 million people are suffering from modern slavery across the world.

#### National Pollution Prevention Day 2021 – Dec 2

- **National Pollution Prevention Day** or **National Pollution Control Day** is observed across India on **2nd December** to memorialize the people who have lost their lives in the 1984 Bhopal Gas Calamity, which is also referred to as the **Bhopal gas tragedy** or **Bhopal disaster**.
- The day aims to **create awareness about the importance of pollution control acts**.
- This Year marks the **37th anniversary of the Bhopal Gas Tragedy**.

#### World Computer Literacy Day 2021 – Dec 2

- **World Computer Literacy Day** is observed on **2nd December** to create awareness about computers and to encourage the development of technological skills among people especially children and women in India.
- The day **also aims to create awareness and drive digital literacy in underserved communities across the world**.

#### International Day of Persons with Disabilities- Dec 3

- **International Day of Persons with Disabilities** is an international observance on **December 3** promoted by the **United Nations** since 1992
- The theme of the day is '**Leadership and participation of persons with disabilities toward an inclusive, accessible, and sustainable post-COVID-19 world**' Every year.
- The day is about promoting the rights and well-being of persons with disabilities at every level of society and development, and to raise awareness of the situation of persons with disabilities in all aspects of political, social, economic, and cultural life.

#### Indian Navy Day Observed on Dec 04

- **Indian Navy Day** is observed annually on **4 December** to recognise the achievements and role of our naval forces.

- The day was chosen to commemorate the launch of Operation Trident against Pakistan during the Indo-Pakistan War in 1971.
- The **theme** of Indian Navy Day 2021 is '**Swarnim Vijay Varsh**' signifying 50 years of India's victory in the Indo-Pakistan war that took place in 1971.
- **Significance of the day:**
- The day gives an opportunity to educate children and Indian citizens about the victory of India in the 1971 war.

#### International Day of Banks: 04 December

- The **United Nations General Assembly** decided to keep December 4 as **International Day of Banks** and it was celebrated for the **first time in 2020**.
- It was celebrated to recognise the importance of multilateral and international development banks in financing sustainable developments.
- It is also observed in recognition of the **vital role of banking systems in Member State in contributing to the improvement of the standard of living**.
- The day is celebrated to the recognition of the significant potential of multilateral development banks and **other international development banks in financing sustainable development** and providing know-how, and also in recognition of the vital role of the banking systems in the Member States in contributing to the improvement of the standard of living.

#### World Soil Day- 5 December:

- **World Soil Day (WSD)** is held annually on **5 December** as a means to focus attention on the importance of healthy soil and to advocate for the sustainable management of soil resources.
- An international day to celebrate soil was recommended by the International Union of Soil Sciences (IUSS) in 2002.
- **"Halt soil salinization, enhance soil production"** is the theme for World Soil Day 2021.
- The day aims to raise awareness about **soil degradation**. **Industrialisation or poor management of agricultural land worsens the condition of the soil**.
- In 2002, the International Union of Soil Sciences (IUSS) recommended an international day to celebrate soil. Under the leadership of the Kingdom of Thailand, the FAO supported the establishment of WSD.
- **In December 2013, the UN General Assembly officially designated December 5th as World Soil Day**, commemorating the birthday of the late **H.M. King Bhumibol Adulyadej**. He was the King of Thailand and one of the leading proponents of this initiative.

#### International Anti-Corruption Day- Dec 9

- The **International Anti-Corruption Day** is observed globally on **9 December** to raise awareness about corruption and the ways to combat this global ill.
- The day seeks to highlight the role of every part of society - individuals, non-governmental organisations, law enforcement, governments and media persons — **in tackling the issue of corruption.**
- The **theme for this year's** International Anti-Corruption Day is **'Your right, your role: Say no to corruption.'**
- The **United Nations General Assembly (UNGA)** adopted the United Nations Convention Against Corruption on 31 October 2003.
- The Convention, which came into **effect in 2005**, is the only legally binding universal anti-corruption instrument, with a majority of countries being party to the Convention.
- In 2003, the UNGA also designated 9 December as International Anti-Corruption Day to raise awareness about the corruption and how the UN Convention against corruption combats the issue.
- The UN has also set up a Global Task Force on Corruption, which is co-chaired by the **United Nations Development Programme (UNDP)**, the **UN Office on Drugs and Crime (UNODC)** and the **UN Department of Political and Peacebuilding Affairs (DPPA).**

#### Human Rights Day: Dec 10

- **Human Rights Day** is observed by the international community on **December 10 every year.**
- It commemorates the day when the **UN General Assembly** adopted the **Universal Declaration of Human Rights in 1948**
- This year's **theme** is about **'Equality'** that refers to **Article 1** of the UDHR – **"All human beings are born free and equal in dignity and rights."**
- December 10 every year is observed as International Human Rights Day. On this day in 1996, South African President Nelson Mandela signed into law a new constitution for South Africa.
- **United Nations General Assembly also known as UNGA** adopted the UDHR i.e Universal Declaration of Human Rights in the year **1948** on this very day.
- This was adopted with an agenda to eradicate the feeling of alienation from any person's life due to the colour of his/her skin, the background of their community or culture, etc.
- The movement gained popularity instantly and almost 200,000 human rights stamps were ordered in advance from the United Nations Postal Administration in the year 1952.

#### UNICEF Day 2021: Observed on Dec 11

- **UNICEF Day** is observed on **December 11** every year, to spread awareness on saving children's lives, defending their rights and helping them fulfil their potential from childhood to adolescence.

- 2021 Theme is to help children to recover from interruption and learning losses experienced through the pandemic in the last two years.
- This year marks **75 years of the United Nations Children's Fund (UNICEF)**.
- United Nations Children's Funds (earlier known as United Nations Children's Emergency Fund) was established by the **United Nations General Agency in 1946**.
- It was formed under the **57 (I) resolution** of the United Nations General Assembly with its headquarters at USA's New York City.
- Initially it was started as a temporary relief fund by the United Nations and known as the United Nations International Children's Emergency Fund.
- It has the entitlement to use the UN logo
- The programme focuses on providing supplies, assistance and also improving the health, nutrition, education and general welfare of children & the organisation became a permanent agency of the UN in 1953.
- The words International and Emergency were dropped from the official name but the acronym was continued.

#### Objective:

- To protect children all across the world and provide access to basic rights like good education, food, sanitation, vaccination, etc
- **Note:**
- UNICEF also releases its **State of World Children Report** on this day with the three main concerns being their undernutrition, obesity and hidden hunger, also called the triple burden of malnutrition.

#### International Mountain Day : Dec 11

- **International Mountain Day** is observed globally on **December 11** every year by The **United Nations (UN)**
- To create awareness about the importance of mountains to life, to highlight the opportunities and constraints in mountain development and to build alliances that will bring positive change to mountain peoples and environments around the world.
- **"Sustainable mountain tourism"** is the theme of International Mountain Day 2021.
- **Key Points**
- The day was established by the **UN General Assembly in 2003** to encourage the sustainable development of mountains.

- **United Nations had declared 2002** as the UN International Year of Mountains.

#### International Universal Health Coverage Day: Observed on Dec 12

- **Universal Health Coverage Day is celebrated annually on December 12** and is promoted by the World Health Organization.
- December 12 is the anniversary of the first unanimous United Nations resolution calling for all nations to provide for their citizens affordable, quality health care
- This year theme of International Universal Health Coverage Day is **“Leave No One’s Health Behind: Invest in health systems for all.”**
- Each year on 12 December, UHC advocates raise their voices to share the stories of the millions of people still waiting for health, champion what we have achieved so far, call on leaders to make bigger and smarter investments in health, and encourage diverse groups to make commitments to help move the world closer to UHC by 2030.
- On 12 December 2012, the **United Nations General Assembly** endorsed a resolution urging countries to accelerate progress toward universal health coverage (UHC) – the idea that everyone, everywhere should have access to quality, affordable health care – as an essential priority for international development

#### National Energy Conservation Day: Dec 14

- **National Energy Conservation Day is observed on December 14**, every year.
- The day focuses on making **people aware of global warming and climate change and promotes efforts towards saving energy resources.**
- Energy conservation is the decision and practice of using less energy.
- Energy conservation means **reducing the consumption of energy by producing** or using less of it.
- Energy conservation is an effort made to reduce the consumption of fuel and use the least energy resources to save for the future.
- The Government of India **has set up Bureau of Energy Efficiency (BEE) on 1st March 2002 under the provision of the Energy Conservation Act, 2001.**
- The BEE is a constitutional body that works under the Indian Government and helps in the development of policies and strategies to reduce the use of energy.
- It focuses on making people aware of global warming and climate change and promoting efforts towards saving energy resources

#### Vijay Diwas is observed on - 16 Dec:

- To commemorate its victory over Pakistan during the 1971 war, **India celebrates Vijay Diwas on December 16** every year as **a tribute to the success of the Indian army.**



- This war led to the creation of Bangladesh.
- India is celebrating the **50th Vijay Diwas in 2021**.
- On this day, we pay homage to all the soldiers who had defended the nation in the war.
- The **Indo-Pakistan war of 1971 which began on December 3**, for 13 days and officially ended on December 16, after which Pakistan surrendered to India.
- It was on this day in 1971, the chief of the Pakistani forces, General AA Khan Niazi, along with 93 thousand troops, had surrendered unconditionally to the allied forces consisting of the Indian Army and Mukti Bahini.
- The end of the war also resulted in the subsequent secession of East Pakistan into Bangladesh.
- **Pakistan surrendered to the Indian army finally and this day is also observed as 'Bijoy Dibos' in Bangladesh.**

#### International Day to End Violence against Sex Workers 2021 - Dec 17

- Every year On **December 17** is Observed as the **International Day to End Violence against Sex Workers**.

##### Purpose :

- To end violence and hate crimes against people doing sex work.
- The day was **first observed in 2003**, and was held as a memorial and vigil for the victims of the Green River Killer in Seattle Washington.
- The day was **founded by Dr Annie Sprinkle** and the Sex Workers Outreach Project USA (SWOP-USA), an American sex worker rights organization.
- The red umbrella is an important symbol for sex worker rights & the **International Committee on the Rights of Sex Workers in Europe (ICRSE)** adopted the **red umbrella** as a **symbol of resistance to discrimination** in 2005.

#### World Arabic Language Day Observed on 18 December

- Globally **World Arabic Language Day** is observed on **18 December** every year.
- **Theme of 2021** is Arabic Language, a bridge between civilisations” reflects the role of Arabic as a connector between civilisations and its role in building peace and enhancing dialogue.

##### Aim :

- To highlight the importance of the language in connecting people, and knowledge systems, throughout history.
- **Purpose :**
- To raise awareness of the history, culture and development of the language by preparing a program of special activities and events.



- To honor the Arabic language, which is spoken by over 400 million people globally.
- The United Nations decided to celebrate the Arabic language on December 18, being the day on which General Assembly **resolution 3190 (XXVIII) of December 18, 1973**, concerned the inclusion of the Arabic language among the official and working languages of the United Nations.

#### Minorities Rights Day- Dec 18

- The **National Minorities Rights Day** is observed in India, **every year on December 18**, to safeguard the Constitutionally guaranteed rights of religious minorities in the country.
- In **1992**, the **United Nations** adopted the Statement on the Individual's Rights belonging to religious, linguistic, or ethnic minorities and the same year the National Commission for Minorities was set up by the Government of India.
- The **Ministry of Minority Affairs** was established on **January 26, 2006**.
- It was carved out of the **Ministry of Social Justice and Empowerment**.
- On National Minorities Rights Day let us take a look at some of the rights and freedom guaranteed by the Constitution to the minorities in the country.
- For the benefit of the minority communities, the Ministry generates overall policy and planning, coordination, evaluation, and review of the regulatory framework and development programme.

#### International Migrants Day- Dec 18

- **Every year, December 18**, is celebrated as **International Migrants Day**.
- The day was designated by the General Assembly of the United Nations on **December 4, 2000**.
- The **theme** for the year 2021 is '**Harnessing the potential of human mobility**'.
- The day was selected to mark the anniversary of the **1990 adoption by UNGA** of the International Convention on the Protection of the Rights of All Migrant Workers and Members of Their Families
- This year, the **World Health Organization** has marked the day with the launch of the "**Refugee and migrant health: Global Competency Standards for health workers**" (the Standards).
- The Standards and accompanying Knowledge Guide and Curriculum Guide aim to strengthen the health workforce and support the provision of quality people-centred and culturally sensitive health services to migrants and refugees.

#### Goa's Liberation Day- 19 Dec

- **Goa Liberation Day** is observed on **December 19** every year in India, and it marks the day Indian armed forces **freed Goa in 1961** following **450 years of Portuguese rule**.
- The **Portuguese colonised** several parts of India in 1510 but by the end of the 19th-century Portuguese colonies in India were limited to Goa, Daman, Diu, Dadra, Nagar Haveli and Anjediva Island.

- The Goa liberation movement, which sought to end Portuguese colonial rule in Goa, started off with small scale revolts.
- According to the Indian Navy website, Indian troops reclaimed the Goan territory on December 19 with little resistance and the deposed **governor general Manuel António Vassalo e Silva** signed the certificate of surrender thus bringing Portuguese rule in the region to an end.
- This made India completely free from foreign rule.
- The War Memorial at Indian Naval Ship Gomantak was constructed in memory of seven young gallant sailors and other personnel who laid down their lives on 19 Dec 1961 in the “**Operation Vijay**” undertaken by the **Indian Navy for the liberation of Anjadip Island and Territories of Goa, Daman and Diu**

#### International Human Solidarity Day- 20 Dec

- **International Human Solidarity Day**, observed on **December 20**, is an international annual **Unity Day** of the **United Nations** and its member states
- According to the **United Nations Millennium Declaration**, solidarity is among the fundamental values that are essential to international relations.

#### Significance:

- To celebrate unity in diversity
- To remind governments to respect their commitments to international agreements
- To raise public awareness
- To encourage new initiatives to eradicate poverty.
- **The General Assembly, on 22 December 2005**, by resolution 60/209 identified solidarity as one of the fundamental and universal values that should underlie relations between peoples in the **twenty-first century**, and in that regard decided to **proclaimed 20 December** of each year **International Human Solidarity Day**.

#### National Mathematics Day: Dec 22

- **Every year, December 22 is celebrated as National Mathematics Day** in India in honour of mathematical genius Srinivasa Ramanujan (1887-1920).
- This year India will celebrate the **134th Birth anniversary of Srinivasa Ramanujan**
- The day was announced as the **national mathematics day by paying the tribute to Ramanujan in Chennai**.
- The celebrations were announced by the then **Prime Minister Manmohan Singh at Madras University in 2012**.
- Ramanujan died at the young age of 32 because of deteriorating health on April 26, 1920.
- Ramanujan was born on **December 22, 1887, in Tamil Nadu's Erode**.

- He had enrolled himself in Madras' Pachaiyappa College at the age of 14.
- He was one of the prestigious Indian Mathematicians who has mastered trigonometry at age of 12 and made great contributions to mathematical concepts such as number theory, infinite series, and continued fractions.

#### Indian National Farmer's Day or Kisan Diwas : Dec 23

- **National Farmer's Day or Kisan Diwas** is celebrated across the nation on December 23 to commemorate the birth anniversary of the **5th Prime Minister of India, Chaudhary Charan Singh**.
- He was born on **23rd December 1902 at Noorpur in Meerut, Uttar Pradesh** and he is popularly known as the "**Champion of India's peasants**".
- The day also celebrates and honours the contribution of the farmers and their importance in the development of the country.
- This year Kisan Diwas 2021 marks the **119th birth anniversary of Chaudhary Charan Singh**.

#### National Siddha Day: Dec 23

- **Siddha day** is annually observed on **23rd December** to create awareness about the Siddha system of medicine.
- This year 2021 marks the **5th anniversary of National Siddha day**. The first-ever National Siddha Day was observed on **4th January 2018**.
- The day is organised by the Ministry of Ayurveda, Yoga, Naturopathy, Unani, Siddha, Sowa-Rigpa and Homoeopathy (AYUSH) on the birthday of **Siddhar Agathiyar**, which happens during the Ayilyam star in the Tamil month of Margazhi.

#### **Ministry of AYUSH:**

- Union Minister: Sarbananda Sonowal.
- Minister of State: Dr. Munjpara Mahendrabhai Kalubhai

#### National Consumer Rights Day- Dec 24:

- **December 24** is celebrated annually in India as **National Consumer Rights Day**, also called National Consumer Day, to commemorate **December 24, 1986**, when the Consumer Protection Act received assent of the President of India.
- The purpose of the day is **to make consumers aware of their rights and responsibilities**.
- The Union government, in partnership with the state government, conducts events on consumer awareness.
- The National Consumer Rights Day was observed for the first time in **1986 under the Consumer Protection Act**.

- It's different from World Consumer Day, which is celebrated annually on March 15.
- The **Consumer Protection Act** came into force in 1986.
- In 2019, the **Consumer Protection Act 1986 was revised**. Later, the Ministry of Consumer Affairs, Food and Public Distribution announced the **CPA 2019 bill put to effect on July 20, 2020**.

#### **Good Governance Day- Dec 25:**

- **Good governance day** is observed annually on **December 25**.
- The day aims to let the citizens, the students, who are the future of the country know about the government's responsibilities and duties that it needs to fulfill.
- The day is also celebrated to **commemorate the birth anniversary of India's former Prime Minister, Atal Bihari Vajpayee**.
- On **December 23, 2014, Atal Bihari Vajpayee and Pandit Madan Mohan Malaviya** (posthumously) were announced as recipients of India's highest civilian award, **Bharat Ratna**.
- Following the announcement, the Modi government announced that the birth anniversary of the former Prime Minister would be treated as Good Governance Day.
- Since then, the day is celebrated throughout the country every year on December 25.

#### **International Day of Epidemic Preparedness 2021: Dec 27**

- The **United Nations's International Day of Epidemic Preparedness** is observed on **27th December** to create awareness about the importance of the prevention of, preparedness for and partnership against epidemics.
- The **27th December 2021** marks the **2nd International Day of Epidemic Preparedness**.

### **CURRENT AFFAIRS: BANKING AND ECONOMY**

#### **RBI appoints additional director on board of Ujjivan SFB**

- The Reserve Bank of India has appointed **P.N. Raghunath, General Manager, Reserve Bank of India**, as an Additional Director on the board of **Ujjivan Small Finance Bank** for a period of two years.
- Previously, the RBI had on **September 16** appointed a **special committee of directors**, with three independent directors as members, to oversee the day-to-day operations.
- The bank has been facing some amount of turmoil in recent months. Its **Managing Director and CEO, Nitin Chugh, resigned earlier this year**.
- The lender has also had problems with asset quality as gross non-performing assets surged to Rs 1,712.65 crore or 11.8 per cent of gross advances as on September 30, 2021.

#### **NBFC Agriwise Finserv partners Central Bank of India for agri loan disbursals**

- **Agriwise Finserv Limited**, an agri-focussed NBFC, has entered into a **co-lending agreement** with **Central Bank of India** for agri-loan disbursal.

- The co-lending agreement will ensure that the farmer, agri and allied **community get finance at affordable rates in a simple, transparent and speedy manner.**
- The loan will be disbursed at a blended interest rate, as per the RBI directive on co-lending of loans

#### **RBI imposes ₹1 crore penalty on Union Bank of India**

- The Reserve Bank of India (RBI) has imposed a monetary penalty of **₹1 crore on Union Bank of India (UBI)** for **non-compliance with certain provisions of its directions relating to fraud classification and reporting and sale of stressed assets.**
- The central bank, in a statement, said its inspection of UBI revealed, inter alia, non-compliance with the above-mentioned directions to the extent of
  - **failure to classify an account as Red Flag Account despite presence of Early Warning Signals and**
  - **failure to disclose ageing of and provisioning for Security Receipts (SRs) in its Annual Report.**
- This action is based on the deficiencies in regulatory compliance and is not intended to pronounce upon the validity of any transaction or agreement entered into by the bank with its customers.

#### **Regional Rural Banks surpass prescribed lending target to Small & Marginal Farmers & SCs/STs**

- **Regional Rural Banks (RRBs)** have been playing an important role in purveying agricultural credit, particularly to Small and Marginal Farmers (**SF/MF**) and **weaker sections of the society.**
- The RRBs have surpassed the prescribed target of lending to the SMFs & Weaker Sections during the years 2018-2019 to 2020-21 as can be seen in the table below:
- Government of India implements an interest subvention scheme under which short term crop loans up to **Rs.3.00 lakh are provided to farmers at a reduced interest rate of 7% p.a.**
- The scheme provides interest subvention of **2% per annum to Banks** on use of their own resources.
- Besides, additional 3% incentive is given to the farmers for prompt repayment of the loan, thereby reducing the effective rate of interest to 4%.
- **The Kisan Credit Card (KCC)** scheme was introduced in 1998 for issue of KCC to farmers.
- The scheme aims at providing adequate and timely credit support **from the banking system under a single window with flexible** and simplified procedure to the farmers to meet their short-term credit requirements for cultivation of crops, investment credit requirement for agriculture and allied activities and other needs.

#### **RBI forms three-member Advisory Committee to assist Administrator of Reliance Capital**

- **The Reserve Bank of India (RBI)** has constituted a three-member Advisory Committee to assist the Administrator of Reliance Capital.

- The members of the Advisory Committee include Sanjeev Nautiyal, former Deputy Managing Director, **State Bank of India**, Srinivasan Varadarajan, former Deputy Managing Director, **Axis Bank** and Praveen P Kadle, former Managing Director and CEO, **Tata Capital**
- The Reserve Bank has constituted a three-member Advisory Committee to assist the Administrator in discharge of his duties
- The RBI had on November 29 superseded the board of directors of **Reliance Capital** and appointed **Nageswara Rao Y, ex-Executive Director, Bank of Maharashtra**, as the Administrator of the company.
- The action was taken by the central bank after numerous defaults by Reliance Capital in repayment of its debt obligations.
- Shares of **Reliance Capital** were locked at the five per cent lower circuit and **closed at ₹18.10 apiece on BSE.**

#### Max Life Insurance extends 'Buy Now, Pay at Approval' facility to wider modes of online transactions

- Max Life Insurance Company Ltd has enhanced its '**Buy Now – Pay at Approval**' feature available on term insurance purchases for customers to include more modes of online transactions.
- **Launched last year for policies purchased online**, the feature allows customers to **apply for a policy through a digital payment method.**
- This helps ensure that the premium amount is not deducted until the proposal evaluation by the insurer
- Previously, the feature was only available on **credit card payments last year.**
- With the **increase** in digital transactions and diversification of payment options, the facility now applies to transactions made through **Credit Cards, Debit Cards, and UPI platforms.**

#### India's GDP grows at 8.4 per cent in second quarter of current fiscal

- **India's Gross domestic product, GDP**, for the second quarter of the current fiscal logged fastest growth among major economies in the world.
- According to the government data released, GDP of the country grew by **8.4 percent from a year ago.**
- As per the **National Statistics Office, NSO**, data, Manufacturing output **increased 5.5 percent** during the period while construction segment grew **7.5 percent in the second quarter.**
- The NSO data suggest that household consumption rose in the **second quarter, July-September, of FY22** despite the second wave of the Covid-19 pandemic, boosting hopes of a quicker recovery in consumer demand in the months ahead.
- Economy of the country has gained momentum during **the quarter as demand in the economy gradually** came back to normalcy after coronavirus related disruptions.
- The economy had contracted **7.5 percent** in the same period last year.



### ADB inks pact for \$250 mn loan to support National Industrial Corridor program

- The Asian Development Bank (ADB) and the central government have signed a \$ 250 million loan to support the **National Industrial Corridor Development Program (NICDP)** to boost the country's manufacturing competitiveness and generate high level employment.
- **Rajat Kumar Mishra**, Additional Secretary, Ministry of Finance, inked for the government of India the agreement for first of the two sub-programmes, each of **USD 250 million**, of the Industrial Corridor Development Program, while **Takeo Konishi**, Country Director of ADB's India Resident Mission, signed for ADB.
- The ADB financing supports India's NICDP that aims to develop world-class industrial nodes that are buttressed by efficient urban agglomerations and multimodal connectivity, including international gateways like ports and airports and inclusive, climate-resilient and sustainable infrastructure.
- India has initiated significant reforms to increase the manufacturing sector's productivity and competitiveness like streamlined business processes to facilitate private investment, reduced corporate taxes and consolidated labour codes.
- As part of NICDP, it is also developing guidelines for green corridor frameworks and climate-resilient infrastructure as well as focusing on enhancing skills for participation of female labour.

### SBI signs master agreement with Adani Capital for co-lending to farmers

- **State Bank of India (SBI)** has signed a master agreement with **Adani Capital** for co-lending to farmers for purchase of tractor and farm implements, to increase efficiency in farm operations and productivity of crops.
- **Adani Capital** is the non-banking finance company (NBFC) arm of Adani Group.
- It would be able to target farmer customers in the interior hinterland of the country looking for adoption of farm mechanisation to enhance productivity of crops.
- India's largest bank underscored that it is actively looking at co-lending opportunities with multiple **NBFCs** for financing farm mechanisation, warehouse receipt finance, Farmer Producer Organisations (FPOs) etc., for enhancing credit flow to double the farmers' income.
- This partnership shall help SBI to expand customer base as well as connect with the underserved farming segment of the country and further contribute towards the growth of India's farm economy.
- Through this partnership our aim is to contribute to farm mechanisation and play a role in improving productivity and income of the farm segment

### DBS revises India's FY2023 growth forecast by 100 bps to 7%

- DBS has revised India's **FY23 growth forecast upwards to 7 percent year-on-year** from 6 per cent earlier.



- The Singapore-based Bank's economic research team observed that the **7 per cent** growth rate in FY23 will be amongst the **fastest in its Asia-10** universe.
- The MNC bank-maintained India's full-year **FY22 forecast at 9.5 per cent**. It noted that with a receding Covid case count, India's recovery is turning more broad-based.
- The DBS team assessed that **into FY23**, beyond the thrust from reopening gains, precautionary savings and sectoral normalisation to pre-pandemic levels, capex generation is likely to be the next driver in raising and maintaining growth on a higher plane.
- With growth expected to gain traction in FY23 and assuming firm commodity prices, the bank expects FY23 inflation to also average a **firm 4.5 per cent** overcoming a high base.
- The policy stance is likely **within first half of 2022**, likely to followed by the start of policy tightening by mid-2022 (50 basis points hikes), when inflation will hover above the mid-point of the target range.

#### Paytm signed an MoU with Skill Development Ministry to train youngsters in fintech

- Paytm has signed a memorandum of understanding (MoU) with the **Directorate of General Training (DGT) in the Ministry of Skill Development and Entrepreneurship** to train 6,000 individuals over a period of three years in the rapidly growing fintech industry.
- The selected individuals will undertake a **six-month programme**, designed by Paytm, in consultation with the DGT.
- It will equip the trainees with fundamentals and knowledge of the **latest fintech IoT products** and financial services.
- The trainees will also undergo professional skills, communications, sales and pitch, and on-the-job training.
- The collaboration is part of **DGT's Flexi-MoU scheme** wherein industry partners provide an opportunity to the youth to acquire skills related to industries with high job potential through a 'learn and earn' approach consisting of a mix of theoretical and on-the-job training.

#### SBI listed USD 650-million Green Bonds on India INX and LuxSE:

- **State Bank of India (SBI)** listed its **USD 650-million green bonds** simultaneously on the **India International Exchange (India INX)** and the **Luxembourg Stock Exchange (LuxSE)**.
- This dual listing is in line with 2021's topic of the **World Investor Week (WIW)**, 'sustainable finance', as indicated by the **regulatory body International Financial Services Centres Authority (IFSCA)**.
- India INX has now emerged as the leading bond listing venue with over **\$33 billion**.
- India INX, the international arm of BSE, had announced its memorandum of understanding with the Luxembourg Stock Exchange (LuxSE) for cooperation in financial services **industry, maintenance of**

**orderly markets in securities respective country**, ESG (environmental, social and governance) and green finance in the local market

- The listing of **green bond with the Luxembourg Stock Exchange** will open up new avenues for market development and fundraising opportunities in the green bond space.

#### **Yes Bank launches credit cards on RuPay platf**

- Private sector lender **Yes Bank** has launched credit cards on **the RuPay platform**.
- Yes Bank has partnered **National Payments Corporation of India (NPCI)** to offer RuPay branded credit cards to its customers on the indigenously developed payment platform
- The partnership is aligned with our ongoing **efforts to expand and diversify our credit offering to customers, ensuring that their payment journeys are contactless, enjoyable and more rewarding.**
- The private sector lender previously had an exclusive tie up with Mastercard but its credit card issuances had been impacted after **the Reserve Bank of India had barred Mastercard** from onboarding new customers on its domestic card network.
- In September this year, it had also announced a partnership with Visa to offer credit card to customers.

#### **Karnataka Bank signed pact with Toyota for vehicle financing:**

- **Karnataka Bank Ltd** has signed a memorandum of understanding with **Toyota Kirloskar Motor Pvt Ltd (TKM)** to introduce financing options for its customers to purchase Toyota vehicles.
- Under this agreement, Karnataka Bank becomes one of the preferred financiers for the vehicles sold by TKM.
- A media statement, the customers can get loans through the digital platform of the bank with interest rate linked to **External Benchmark Lending Rate (EBLR)** for purchasing TKM vehicles for both private and commercial use.
- The tenure of the loan will be **up to 84 months**.
- The bank offers car loans through its extensive branch network with an **indigenously developed end-to-end digital platform** for existing as well as new customers.
- The platform is enabled with simplified and faster processing capabilities.

#### **KVG Bank signs agreement with Liberty General Insurance**

- **Karnataka Vikas Grameena Bank (KVGB)**, a regional rural bank headquartered in Dharwad, has signed a memorandum of understanding (MoU) with **Liberty General Insurance** for selling general insurance products through **629 branches of KVGB**.
- The company will provide a variety of general health insurance products to the customers with reasonably affordable cost.

- The bank has consistently enhanced its portfolio to meet the diverse financial needs of its customers and alliance in this regard is a step in that direction, **requesting company officials to launch customised policies** for the bank's customers.
- **Manish Kotian, Senior Vice-President of Liberty General Insurance**, that partnership with KVGB is an important milestone in the journey of the company to offer its products through a trusted partner to a crucial segment of the State which has traditionally seen **low insurance penetration**.

#### ICICI Bank offers instant overdraft facility to sellers registered on Flipkart

- **ICICI Bank has partnered with Flipkart** to offer an instant and digital overdraft (OD) facility of up to ₹25 lakh to individual sellers and businesses registered on the e-commerce platform.
- Enabled by **API integration**, the partnership helps sellers to avail an OD from the Bank instantly in a process-from application to sanction to disbursement- that is entirely digital.
- Customers of any bank can avail **of ODs from ICICI Bank** if they are registered as sellers with Flipkart.
- Sellers having a current account with **ICICI Bank can immediately start using the OD to meet their working capital requirements**.

#### SBI to sign MoU with Kendriya Sainik Board

- **State Bank of India (SBI)** signed a memorandum of understanding (MoU) with **Kendriya Sainik Board** to support and educate the children of war veterans, ex-servicemen, and war widows.
- India's largest bank said it will provide a grant of ₹1,000 per month to 8,333 war veterans' children.
- The bank **has contributed ₹10 crore to the Armed Forces Flag Day Fund**. The Armed Forces **Flag Day** is celebrated on December 7.
- **Dinesh Khara, Chairman, SBI**, express their gratitude to soldiers who valiantly safeguard our nation and protect its citizens despite facing enormous hardships and believe their efforts will help make a difference in the lives of the war veterans and their families.

#### RBI announces bi-monthly Monetary Policy; Key policy rates remain unchanged

- The Reserve Bank of India has maintained status quo in key policy rates as **the Monetary Policy Committee (MPC) voted unanimously to keep the policy repo rate at four percent to keep the stance accommodative**, Marginal Standing Facility (MSF) rate and **bank rate will remain unchanged at 4.25 percent**.
- **Reverse repo rate** will also remain unchanged at 3.35 percent
- The projection for **real Gross Domestic Product (GDP) growth is retained at 9.5 percent** in 2021-22, consisting of 6.6 percent in the third quarter and six percent in the fourth quarter.

- He pointed out that the real GDP growth is projected at 17.2 percent for Q1 of 2022-23 and at **7.8 percent** for Q2 of 2022-23.
- The Consumer Price Index (CPI) inflation is projected at **5.3 percent** in 2021-22, which consists of 5.1 percent in Q3, and 5.7 percent in Q4 with risk broadly balanced.

Policy Repo Rate	: 4.00%
Reverse Repo Rate	: 3.35%
Marginal Standing Facility Rate	: 4.25%
Bank Rate	: 4.25%
CRR	: 4.00%
SLR	: 18.00%
Base Rate	: 7.30% - 8.80%
MCLR (Overnight)	: 6.50% - 7.00%
Savings Deposit Rate	: 2.70% - 3.00%
Term Deposit Rate > 1 Year	: 4.90% - 5.50%

#### Fitch Ratings cuts India's GDP forecast for FY22 to 8.4%, RBI retains 9.5%

- Fitch Ratings has announced a cut to India's economic growth forecast by 30 basis points (100 basis points mean 1 percentage point) to **8.4 per cent**.
- Earlier, the Ratings Agency had forecasted the economic growth at 8.7 per cent.
- However, it has upped the growth rate projection by **20 basis points for FY 2022-23**.
- They have cut their FY22 (financial year ending March 2022) GDP (gross domestic product) growth forecast, to 8.4 per cent (-0.3pp). GDP growth momentum should peak in FY23, **at 10.3 per cent (+0.2pp), boosted by a consumer-led recovery and the easing of supply disruptions**
- An increasing share of the population being fully vaccinated has reduced the risk of future disruptive outbreaks and will support consumer confidence.
- The agency mentioned that India's economy staged a strong rebound in 3Q21 (July-September) from the Delta variant-induced sharp contraction.
- According to our estimate, **GDP rose a sharp +11.4 percent q-o-q in seasonally adjusted terms** (calendar year), after slumping -12.4 per cent in 2Q21.

#### Federal Bank and Star Health Insurance tie up for bancassurance

- **Federal Bank has partnered with Star Health and Allied Insurance Co Ltd** as a corporate agent to provide health insurance products to the lender's **8.9 million customers spread over 1,291 banking outlets across the country.**
- The bank's **customers can avail benefits of Star Health's retail products** and group affinity products through the bank's various distribution channels

#### **LIC gets RBI approval to hike stake in IndusInd Bank to up to 9.99%**

- **Life Insurance Corporation of India (LIC)** has received approval from the **Reserve Bank of India (RBI)** to increase its stake in **IndusInd Bank to up to 9.99 per cent of the total issued and paid-up capital** of the private sector lender.
- LIC at present holds **4.95 per cent** stake in the bank.
- The bank has received an intimation from the RBI on December 9, 2021, that it has granted its approval to LIC, shareholder of the bank, who holds 4.95 per cent of the total issued and paid-up capital of the bank, to acquire up to 9.99 per cent of the total issued and paid-up capital of the bank
- The approval is **valid for a period of one year that is up to December 8, 2022.**
- Previously, LIC had also received clearance from **RBI to increase its stake in Kotak Mahindra Bank to 9.99 per cent.**

#### **Karnataka Bank bags two DigiDhan award from MeitY**

- Karnataka Bank has been conferred with **two DigiDhan awards** instituted by the Union Ministry of **Electronics and Information Technology (MeitY).**
- According to a statement, the bank received these awards for achieving the target with the **highest percentage in BHIM-UPI transactions** under the private sector bank category consecutively **for two years – 2019-20 and 2020-21.**
- The bank has always stood ahead of the time in adopting the latest digital technology to its products in order to provide the best-in-class service to its customers.
- The bank's commitment to promote digital payments in the country and a less-cash economy has been rewarded through this award from the Union Ministry of Electronics and Information Technology

#### **Reliance Ind, Tata Consultancy, HDFC Bank among most valuable companies: Burgundy Private Hurun India**

- **Reliance Industries is the country's most valuable company** according to the **Burgundy Private Hurun India 500 companies list.**
- With a value of **₹16.7-lakh crore**, Reliance Industries is India's most valuable company, followed by **Tata Consultancy Services with ₹13.1-lakh crore** and **HDFC Bank with ₹9.1-lakh crore**

- Infosys, ICICI Bank, Housing Development Finance Corporation, Bajaj Finance, Kotak Mahindra Bank, Bharti Airtel and Wipro are the rest of the firms that make the top 10.
- The findings are part of the first edition of the **Burgundy Private Hurun India 500** by Burgundy Private, Axis Bank's private banking business, and Hurun India.
- With a **total value of \$3 trillion, more than India's current GDP**, they make up the backbone of India's economy. Together, these 500 companies had combined sales of \$770 billion, and employed 6.9 million staff, which is more than the working population of United Arab Emirates
- Women continue to see lower representation and make up just 16 per cent of the board of directors from the 2021 Burgundy Private Hurun India 500.
- The country's financial capital — **Mumbai** — **had the largest number of firms on the list at 167, followed by Bengaluru with 52 and Chennai with 38.**

#### Bank of Baroda signs MoU with Centrum Housing Finance

- **Bank of Baroda (BoB)** has signed a memorandum of understanding (MoU) with **Centrum Housing Finance (CHFL)** for sourcing and financing housing loan borrowers under co-lending model.
- Harshadkumar T. Solanki, General Manager – Mortgage & Other Retail Assets, Bank of Baroda, with this tie-up the bank will be able to penetrate **deep into markets in Tier 2 and Tier 3 cities at competitive rates.**
- Bank of Baroda would be able to garner housing loan business to **the extent of ₹1,000 crore in one financial year**
- The collaborative approach involved in co-lending helps maximise credit flow to underserved and unserved segments.

#### Paytm Payments Bank receives Scheduled Bank status from RBI

- **Paytm Payments Bank Limited (PPBL)**, an associate entity of Paytm, has received Scheduled Bank status from Reserve Bank of India (RBI) and has been included in the **Second Schedule to the Reserve Bank of India Act, 1934.**
- Being a **Scheduled Payments Bank**, **Paytm Payments Bank can now explore new business opportunities.**
- The bank can participate in government and other large corporations issued Request for Proposals (RFP), primary auctions, **fixed-rate and variable rate repos, and reverse repos, along with participation in Marginal Standing Facility.**
- Paytm Payments Bank would now also be eligible to partner in government-run financial inclusion schemes.
- **As per RBI Act 1934, banks** satisfying the central bank that its affairs are not being conducted in a manner detrimental to the interests of its depositors are included in the second schedule.



- Paytm Payments Bank has emerged as one of the largest enablers of digital payments in the country with its payment instruments such as **Paytm Wallet, Paytm FASTag, net banking and Paytm UPI**.
- In the last **fiscal year**, **Paytm Payments Bank** has also become the largest issuer and acquirer of FASTags in the country.

#### LIC launches Dhan Rekha plan:

- **The Life Insurance Corporation of India** has launched a new non-linked, non- participating, individual **savings life insurance plan**. Called **Dhan Rekha**, it offers special premium rates for female lives.
- “The plan is also allowed for the third gender,” LIC, adding that all benefits under the plan are fully guaranteed.
- The minimum sum assured **under this plan is ₹2 lakh** and there is no limit for maximum sum assured.
- The minimum age at entry ranges **from 90 days to eight years** and the maximum age at entry ranges **from 35 years to 55 years depending upon the chosen policy term**.
- This plan also takes care of liquidity needs through loan facility. Optional riders are available under this plan on payment of additional premium subject to conditions

#### IPPB partners NPCI Bharat BillPay for recurring payments:

- **India Post Payments Bank (IPPB) and NPCI Bharat BillPay** have partnered to facilitate cash-based assisted bill payments at the doorstep of customers.
- The bill payments service will benefit millions of unbanked and underserved customers in remote locations, who will now be able to access payment solutions at their doorstep.
- With this collaboration, **NPCI Bharat BillPay and IPPB** are set to empower citizens by enabling bill payments at the doorstep through our ubiquitous network of **Gramin Dak Sevaks and postal staff**.
- **Both IPPB and non-IPPB customers will be able to make recurring transactions** such as mobile postpaid, D2H recharge, school fees, and other utility services by using the bank’s mobile banking service.
- Transactions on Bharat Bill Payment have been growing rapidly, and payments on its **Central Unit touched 60.62 million by volume and ₹10,530.2 crore** by value for more than 20,349 billers in October.

#### Fintech industry expected to be valued over \$150 billion by 2025:

- **India’s fintech industry** has raised a cumulative funding of **\$27.6 billion** and is expected to be valued at over **\$150 billion by 2025**, **Amitabh Kant, CEO, NITI Aayog**.
- India’s fintech ecosystem has reached here because of a systematic approach, with the government playing a key role as a facilitator.
- The growth story of the **fintech ecosystem** to **India’s larger Digital India** initiative and the development of **UPI and India Stack**.



- A collaborative approach to UPI allowed the private sector to build apps on the top of the underlined digital infrastructure to enable payment services.
- This has allowed the whole ecosystem of payment start-ups to flourish. With payments problems solved, the fintech ecosystem would shift focus towards lending where there has been emphasis towards both consumers as well as MSMEs-based lending
- Fintech has allowed innovations in the space allowing for new models to come up such as flow-based lending. Now there is greater intention that is directed towards personal finance and money management.
- A plethora of entities have come up recently in the space, with wider acceptance of wealth-management products, their ecosystem is also able to tackle some of the more traditional financial products which are more complex, capital intensive and have a longer innovation cycle.
- Initially, aggregator startups emerged which helped other retailers. Now the new insurance tech companies are manufacturing as well as distributing products covering the end to end.

#### RBI unveils PCA framework for NBFCs effective Oct 2022:

- The Reserve Bank of India (RBI) has decided to put in place a prompt corrective action (PCA) framework for troubled non-banking finance companies to restore their financial health.
- Until now, the RBI had imposed PCA only on banks.
- The move comes in the wake of large NBFCs such as IL&FS, DHFL, SREI Group and Reliance Capital getting into financial trouble over the last few years.
- Referring to the mushrooming of NBFCs and their links to other segments of the financial system, the RBI said the PCA framework will further strengthen the supervisory tools.
- The PCA framework for NBFCs comes into effect from October 1, 2022, based on their financial position on or after March 31, 2022.
- The framework will apply to all deposit-taking NBFCs, excluding government companies, and all non-deposit taking NBFCs in the middle, upper and top layers.
- The central bank will track three indicators — capital to risk-weighted assets ratio (CRAR), Tier I ratio and net non-performing assets (NNPAs), including non-performing investments (NPIs).
- The RBI may also recommend to promoters/shareholders to bring in new management/board; remove managerial persons under the RBI Act, as applicable; seek removal of director and/or appointment of another person as director in his place; supersede the board under the RBI Act and appoint an administrator, among others.
- The central bank said the PCA framework for NBFCs will be reviewed after three years.

#### IndiGo partners with Kotak Mahindra Bank to launch Ka-ching credit card:

- **IndiGo, a leading carrier, and Kotak Mahindra Bank (KMBL), a leading private sector lender has launched the travel credit card 'Ka-ching'.**
- **The co-branded credit card — which will be on the Visa platform — was officially launched at the Delhi Airport by William Boulter, Chief Commercial Officer, IndiGo, and Ambuj Chandna, President – Consumer Assets, Kotak Mahindra Bank, in the presence of officials from both the organizations.**
- **Ka-ching will enable customers to accrue accelerated 6E Rewards on all spends that can be redeemed against the purchase of airline tickets anytime with no blackout dates.**
- **Furthermore, customers will have access to other special benefits on IndiGo, including discounted convenience fee, priority check-in, choice of seat and a complimentary meal, besides earning additional rewards on dining, shopping, transport, medical bill, utilities, fuel and other major categories**

#### **Vodafone Idea pays ₹1,500 cr dues to IDFC First Bank:**

- **Debt-laden Vodafone Idea has paid ₹1,500 crore to IDFC First Bank along with ₹110 crore interest.**
- **In an exchange filing to the NSE, Vodafone Idea notified that it had made timely payment of principal amount together with interest for certain debentures.**
- **These debentures were due on December 13 and the payment was made on time.**
- **The company did not disclose the details of the payment.**
- **Rating agencies also hold poor ratings for Vi in light of its financial state. CARE ratings hold a 'B-' rating (under credit watch with negative implications) for the telco.**
- **Instruments with this rating are considered to have a high risk of default regarding timely servicing of financial obligations. Crisil has withdrawn its rating on Vodafone Idea since July 2020.**

#### **Pine Labs partners with AU Small Finance Bank:**

- **Pine Labs, a merchant commerce platform, has partnered with AU Small Finance Bank, the country's largest small finance bank.**
- **With this partnership, the bank's credit cardholders will now be able to avail of equated monthly instalments (EMI) offers at the point of sale and convert their regular purchase into interest-free EMIs across the over 2 lakh merchant base of Pine Labs, pan India.**
- **Currently, Pine Labs powers more than 30 different credit issuers and NBFC partners on its Android PoS terminals.**
- **The collaboration between the two entities is expected to benefit the large underbanked population of India.**
- **In fact, about 55-60 per cent of customers of the AU Small Finance Bank are first-time credit cardholders with a presence across the west, north, and central parts of India and prominent Tier 3 and 4 cities.**

- Pine Labs is expanding its **'Buy Now Pay Later'** offering to **international markets** as well and recently partnered with **Standard Chartered Malaysia** to offer **zero-interest instalment purchase options** to the bank's customers.

#### RBI allows Payments Banks, SFBs to conduct Govt agency business:

- **Scheduled payments banks and scheduled small finance banks** will be eligible to conduct Government agency business, according to the Reserve Bank of India (RBI).
- The central bank has decided in this regard in consultation with the **Department of Financial Services (DFS), Ministry of Finance (MoF)**.
- **Any payment bank or small finance bank** that intends to undertake Government agency business may be appointed as an agent of RBI upon execution of an **agreement with RBI**, provided that the overarching regulatory framework prescribed for these banks is complied with.
- This move comes in the wake of the embargo put in place from September 2012 by DFS on the further allocation of Government business to private sector banks being **been lifted in February 2021**.
- Further, Government Departments/State Governments can discontinue the arrangement after giving notice to the concerned agency banks, keeping RBI informed.

#### SBI renews MoU with Indian Army:

- **SBI has renewed its Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) with the Indian Army** to offer benefits to all serving as well as retired Army Personnel and their families through its **Defence Salary Package (DSP) Scheme**.
- Under this MoU, **SBI offers zero-balance Savings Bank accounts** with complimentary benefits and waiver of service charges.
- Further, the bank is offering benefits through complimentary Personal and Air Accidental Insurance (Death) covers, additional cover in case of on-duty death, Permanent Total Disability / Partial Disability covers.
- Emphasizing that SBI always believed in providing the best value in its engagement with Army personnel, who dedicate their lives for the safety of our nation and citizens, **Dinesh Kumar Khara, Chairman, the Defence Salary Package (Army) ensures ease of access to banking facilities** to them and their families.

#### Tata Motors to sign a retail finance MoU with Bandhan Bank:

- **Tata Motors has partnered with Bandhan Bank** to sign a retail finance MoU, **offering finance options to all its passenger vehicle customers**.

- As part of the tie-up, Bandhan Bank will provide loans to Tata Motors' customers at an **interest rate starting from 7.50 per cent**.
- This scheme will offer a maximum of 90 percent financing on the total on-road cost of the vehicle.
- Tata Motors, have always aimed to make our personal mobility solutions more affordable and accessible for individuals and families at beneficial rates.
- These offers will make the process of purchasing our cars much easier for customers and that this will positively impact their **overall buying experience of Tata cars**

#### Axis Bank tied up with Swift to provide digital banking solution:

- Axis Bank is integrating **different digitisation initiatives by government bodies** and service providers to extend an end-to-end service to business clients.
- **The bank's B2B (business-to-business) digitisation efforts are being supported by Swift** — a cooperative of global banks that acts as an intermediary between banks and sets standards.
- Axis Bank is working with new digital services from provider **Swift to provide a comprehensive digital solution to clients**.

#### HomeFirst enters into co-lending partnership with Union Bank

- **Home First Finance Company India Ltd (HomeFirst)** has entered into a strategic co-lending partnership with **Union Bank of India (UBI)** to offer home loans to customers.
- The partnership aims at leveraging the **strengths of both entities to provide a seamless experience to retail home loan** customers in the priority sector
- Under this partnership, HomeFirst will originate loans as per the agreed credit policy of UBI in line with the provisions of RBI's Co-Lending Model.
- HomeFirst will retain minimum **20 per cent of the loan on its book while 80 per cent will be on UBI's book**.
- The housing finance company will act as a servicing agent for the loan accounts sourced under this partnership throughout the life cycle of the loan, as per the filing.
- This partnership will enable HomeFirst to expand its product offerings to customers in the geographies it operates

#### PhonePe tokenized cards on Visa, Mastercard and Rupay

- Digital payments platform **PhonePe** has announced that it has tokenised cards on all three major payment networks - **Visa, Mastercard and Rupay**.
- **PhonePe's tokenisation solution** will help businesses save time and effort by removing the need to integrate with multiple card networks while complying with RBI guidelines

- The Reserve Bank of India has asked payment aggregators and the merchants onboarded by them to not store actual credit card data.
- Starting **January 1, 2022, no entity in the card transaction or payment chain**, other than the card issuers and/or card networks, shall store the actual card data. Instead, cardholders can get digital tokens to complete their online transactions.
- PhonePe is offering its tokenisation solution "**PhonePe Safecard**" to enable businesses to offer tokenisation on their own platforms via an API integration.
- PhonePe also takes care of any additional authentication for users, if needed. Merchants will also get a dedicated and secured vault in a **PCI-DSS (Payment Card Industry - Data Security Standard)** compliant environment.

#### ICICI Prudential Life Insurance signs the UN's Principles of Responsible Investing

- **ICICI Prudential Life Insurance (IPRULIFE)** has become the first Indian insurance company to sign the **United Nations-supported Principles for Responsible Investment (UNPRI)**, demonstrating its commitment towards the environment, social and governance (ESG) issues.
- In its journey towards promoting sustainability, the company is integrating ESG factors into its investment management framework.
- This private life insurer has also adopted sustainability principles across its business activities.
- With assets under management of over **₹2.37 trillion**, **IPRULIFE** is a key institutional investor and believes integrating the ESG framework in its investment management practices will ensure sustainable value creation for all stakeholders.
- The UNPRI is an investor initiative in partnership with the two bodies of United Nations – **UN Environment Programme Finance Initiative and UN Global Compact**.
- Its goals are to understand the investment implications of environmental, social and governance issues and support signatories in integrating these issues into investment and ownership decisions.
- Currently, it has over **4,000 signatories from 60 countries collectively representing over \$120 trillion** of assets committed to integrating ESG considerations into their investment practices and ownership policies.

#### IFSCA sets up committee for creating a Framework for transfer of stressed loans from domestic lenders to permitted financial institutions in IFSC

- The **Reserve Bank of India (RBI)** has recently Directions, 2021 dated September 24, 2021 replaced the existing instructions **on the matter of sale/transfer of loan exposures by lending institutions**.
- The RBI directions, inter- alia, permit transfer of loan exposures to any class of entities that are under the regulatory purview of any financial sector regulator in subject to certain conditions.

- The RBI directions also call for the respective financial regulator to put in place a framework for this purpose in consultation with RBI.
- **IFSCA has set up a committee of experts to examine and recommend measures** to create such a framework for transfer of stressed loans from domestic lenders to permitted financial institutions in IFSC.
- **Shri G. Padmanabhan, Former Executive Director, Reserve Bank of India, shall be chairing the committee** which will also include representative from Law firm and other market participants possessing expertise in Banking and Legal issues.
- The Committee has been **mandated to examine the provisions of the RBI directions pertaining to transfer of stressed loans by lending institutions to entities in IFSCA**, identify areas/issues of the directions which require further clarification from RBI, suggest both the contents of the framework to be put in place by IFSCA to enable such transfers and amendments/additions to the RBI directions to make it easier to affect such transfers.

#### **NPCI enables the market on Tokenization for RuPay users with NTS**

- Ahead of the deadline for card tokenisation, **National Payments Corporation of India (NPCI)** has joined hands with brands and aggregators such as bigbasket, Goibibo, MakeMyTrip, JioPay, Juspay, Paytm, and PhonePe to **introduce a tokenisation facility supported by the recently launched NPCI Tokenisation System (NTS)**.
- This facility will help millions of customers maintain the security of their card financial data for online transactions, as their **RuPay card details will now be completely safe and secure in a secure vault within NTS**. Several other merchants and aggregators are expected to enable this functionality of Card token-on-File soon.
- With NTS, these brands can now save the token reference number (token reference on file) against all existing stored card numbers, which enhances safety and further strengthen the digital payments ecosystem in the country.
- **The deadline for card tokenisation is December 31, 2021 and effective January 1, 2022**, no entity in the card transaction or payment chain, other than the card issuers and / or card networks, shall store the actual card data.

#### **Bajaj Allianz General Insurance launches 'Health Prime' Rider**

- **Bajaj Allianz General Insurance**, one of the leading private general insurers of India announced the launch of its unique **'Health Prime' rider**.
- This rider can be availed along with the **company's health insurance and personal accident policies**.
- The idea behind this rider is to provide **holistic healthcare solutions**.



- In order to provide seamless services under this rider, the Company has tied up **with Bajaj Finserv Health Ltd.**, a health-tech company that will leverage its extensive network of more than 2,500 lab chains and **90,000 doctors with various specialities to serve the customers of Bajaj Allianz General Insurance.**

#### India, ADB sign \$112 million loan for establishing skill university in Assam

- The Government of India and the **Asian Development Bank (ADB)** has signed a **\$112 million loan to set up a skill university in Assam** that will strengthen industry-aligned and flexible skills education and training system in the state.
- Mr Rajat Kumar Mishra, Additional Secretary, Department of Economic Affairs, Ministry of Finance, signed for Government of India the agreement for **the Assam Skill University (ASU) Project**, while **Takeo Konishi, Country Director of ADB's India Resident Mission signed for ADB.**
- ADB's engagement in the north-eastern region including studies to develop an economic corridor emphasizes importance of aligning skills development and technical and vocational education with infrastructure and industrial development.
- The project promotes **this strategic vision by improving skills and employability of youth** and adults to enhance the productivity and competitiveness of Assam's economy and industry.
- The project will support the design and construction of environmentally sustainable and climate-resilient ASU campus and facilities equipped with state-of-the-art technologies.
- The loan is **supplemented by a \$1 million grant from the Japan Fund for Poverty Reduction** to support introduction of technologies for smart campus management and integrated teaching, learning, and career development management.

#### India, ADB sign \$350 million loan for sustainable urban services in India

- The Government of India and the **Asian Development Bank (ADB)** has signed a **\$350 million policy-based loan to improve access to urban services in India** by accelerating policy actions and reforms to enhance service delivery and promote performance-based central fiscal transfers to urban local bodies (ULBs).
- **Rajat Kumar Mishra, Additional Secretary, Department of Economic Affairs** signed for Government of India, the loan agreement for **the first subprogram of \$350 million under Sustainable Urban Development and Service Delivery Program** while **Takeo Konishi, Country Director of ADB's India Resident Mission,** signed for ADB.
- The first subprogram will establish essential policies and guidelines for urban reforms at the national level followed by specific reform actions and program proposals at the state and ULB-level under second subprogram.



- The program will also promote performance-based central fiscal transfers to ULBs on the recommendations of the **15th Finance Commission by linking fiscal transfers to improved urban service delivery.**
- This will help boost local financial resource generation in ULBs resulting in improved urban governance.
- ADB will provide knowledge and advisory support to the Ministry of Housing and Urban Affairs in program implementation, including monitoring and evaluation.
- It will also support urban local bodies particularly in select low-income states to implement policy reforms, prepare investment plans, and **provide recommendations on cross-cutting issues like climate change,** environmental and social safeguards assessment, and gender equality and social inclusion.

#### India, ADB sign \$150 million loan to provide affordable housing for urban poor in Tamil Nadu

- **The Government of India and Asian Development Bank (ADB) has signed a \$150 million loan to provide access to inclusive, resilient, and sustainable housing for the urban poor in the state of Tamil Nadu.**
- The signatories to the loan agreement for Inclusive, Resilient and Sustainable Housing for Urban Poor Sector Project in Tamil Nadu were Mr. Rajat Kumar Mishra, Additional Secretary, Department of Economic Affairs in the Ministry of Finance who signed for the Government of India, and Mr. **Takeo Konishi, Country Director of ADB's India Resident Mission, who signed for ADB.**
- The project is aligned with the Government of India's development priorities and policies on urban sector development, particularly the flagship program **PMAY-Housing for All (Urban)**, and will address housing shortage among poor urban dwellers in Tamil Nadu with provision of housing to eligible families.
- A portion of ADB's assistance will be invested by the state government as equity into the **Tamil Nadu Shelter Fund to catalyze private sector financing and support investments** mainly in industrial housing and working women's hostels for low-income and migrant workers.
- In addition, **ADB will provide a \$1.5 million technical assistance (TA) grant from its Technical Assistance Special Fund** to support the capacity building of government agencies responsible for delivering affordable housing and regional planning in Tamil Nadu.
- The TA will document successful approaches to affordable housing delivery, including the graduation program for vulnerable relocated beneficiaries, that can be adopted in other cities and countries.

#### Karnataka Gramin Bank in pact with Care Health Insurance

- The **Bellari-headquartered Karnataka Gramin Bank (KGB), sponsored by Canara Bank,** has signed a memorandum of understanding (MoU) with **Care Health Insurance Ltd** to market health insurance products for customers of the bank across 22 districts **of Karnataka.**

- **Shreenath Joshi, Chairman of KGB**, the products will go a long way in building a sense of security amongst the customers in the current Covid pandemic situation.
- **Shreenath Joshi and Atul Sabharwal signed the MoU in Bellari.**
- The products include those designed for the rural masses and farmers who comprise a chunk of the total clientele of the bank exceeding 1.5 crore.

#### Mastercard and Google Pay partner for tokenization for card-based payments

- **Mastercard and Google** has announced the rollout of **tokenisation for Google Pay users transacting through Mastercard credit and debit cards.**
- With this collaboration, Google Pay Android users can scan and pay across all **Bharat QR-enabled merchants, tap-and-pay, and make in-app transactions through their Mastercard debit and credit card.**
- For a convenient registration, users will have to do a one-time setup by entering their card details and their OTP to add their card on the Google Pay app,
- This initiative is an extension of Mastercard's long standing collaboration with Google and will go a long way towards enabling India's digital economy.

#### Paytm Payments Bank, MoneyGram partner to offer international remittance directly to Paytm Wallet

- **Paytm Payments Bank**, an associate entity of Paytm, and Nasdaq-listed MoneyGram, a global leader in digital P2P payments, have entered into a **partnership to enable MoneyGram customers globally to send money in real-time to a Paytm Wallet user in India.**
- With this **partnership**, MoneyGram users abroad can now conveniently transfer money to full **KYC Paytm wallet users in India from the comfort of their homes.**
- This is **MoneyGram's first mobile wallet partnership in India** and is an important development as the country's evolution to digital receives is occurring rapidly.
- MoneyGram transactions in India received digitally currently represent nearly 50 per cent of all transactions received in the country.
- The number of transactions sent directly to bank accounts is **up about six times from just under 10 per cent, two years ago.**
- With this, MoneyGram expects higher growth rates as customers in India continue to value the convenience of digital receives.
- Paytm Payments Bank has millions of wallet customers, who use the Paytm Wallet for its convenience including having greater control over their expenses, highly secure payments, fast forward on utility bill payments, and seamless integration across mobile, online and in-store payments and so much more.

- India is the world's largest inbound market with **remittances estimated at \$83 billion for the year 2020**, according to World Bank.

#### Government of India & European Investment Bank sign finance contract for first tranche loan of Euro 250 million for Agra Metro Rail project:

- The **Government of India (GoI)** and **European Investment Bank (EIB)** has signed a Finance Contract for first tranche loan of **Euro 250 million for Agra Metro Rail Project**.
- Mr. **Rajat Kumar Mishra**, Additional Secretary, Department of Economic Affairs, Ministry of Finance, on behalf of Government of India and Mr. **Edvardas Bumstein** as jointly with Mr. **Roger Stuart**, Head of Divisions on behalf of European Investment Bank (EIB) signed the loan document **in New Delhi and in Brussels respectively**.
- Hon'ble Prime Minister Shri Narendra Modi had inaugurated construction work of Agra Metro project in Agra, Uttar Pradesh, last year through video conference.
- EIB had approved a total loan of **Euro 450 million to fund the Agra Metro Rail Project**.
- The project aims to provide safe, reliable, affordable and environment friendly public Mass Rapid Transit System for Agra city which will improve mobility and support endeavour for planned urban development in Agra.
- The financing from EIB will help to **fund construction of 29.4 km metro** corridor comprises of Corridor-1 from Sikandara to Taj East Gate and Corridor-2 from Agra Cantt to Kalindi Vihar in the Agra City.

#### RBI imposes ₹30 lakh penalty on MUFG Bank:

- The Reserve Bank of India has imposed a **monetary penalty of ₹30 Lakh on MUFG Bank Ltd** for non-compliance with its directions on '**Loans and Advances – Statutory and Other Restrictions**'.
- **MUFG Bank has the largest network amongst Japanese banks in India**, with a presence in five locations.
- Inspection of the bank revealed, inter alia, non-compliance with the aforesaid direction to the extent that it had sanctioned loans and advances to companies whose board of directors included person(s) who were director(s) on boards of other banks, without such sanctions being accorded at the level of its management committee.
- RBI emphasised that its action is based on the **deficiencies in regulatory compliance** and is not intended to pronounce upon **the validity of any transaction or agreement entered into by the bank with its customers**.
- **MUFG Bank caters to the banking needs of Japanese** and global corporates that are establishing or growing their businesses in India.

#### IndusInd Bank, NPCI tie-up to offer remittances to India using UPI IDs:

- **IndusInd Bank** has joined hands with **the National Payments Corporation of India (NPCI)** for offering real-time cross-border remittances to India using UPI IDs for its **Money Transfer Operator (MTO)** partners.
- The **private sector bank, has become the first Indian bank** to go live on UPI for Cross Border Payments/NRI Remittances.
- Under this arrangement, the MTOs will be using the **IndusInd Bank channel to connect with NPCI's UPI** payment systems for validation and cross-border payment settlement into beneficiary accounts.
- This collaboration will enable partners of **IndusInd Bank to facilitate remittances from Non-Resident Indians (NRI) and People of Indian Origin (PIO)** living across the globe to transfer money to their Non-Resident External (NRE) and Non-Resident Ordinary (NRO) accounts as well as to their families and relatives back in India.
- **IndusInd Bank has started off with Thailand** for Foreign Inward Remittance (FIR) through UPI.

#### **HDFC Life Insurance announces bancassurance tie-up with South Indian Bank:**

- **HDFC Life Insurance Company** has announced a **bancassurance tie-up with South Indian Bank (SIB)**.
- This bancassurance arrangement will **enable customers of SIB to avail HDFC Life's life insurance** products, including solutions for **protection, savings and investment, retirement and critical illness**.
- **HDFC Life aims to provide SIB's customer base** with innovative products and superior levels of service via both the physical and digital routes.
- With insurance getting paramount importance especially during the pandemic, **South Indian Bank's strong customer connect and HDFC Life's product suite**, will ensure the customer is getting the best-in-class insurance solutions on offer.

#### **RBI extends card tokenisation deadline by 6 months till June-end:**

- **The Reserve Bank of India (RBI)** has extended the **card-on-file (CoF) tokenisation deadline by six months to June 30, 2022**, in view of various representations received from industry bodies.
- Card-on-file, or CoF, refers to card information stored by payment gateway and merchants to process future transactions.
- The **earlier deadline was December 31, 2021**.
- Under tokenisation services, a unique alternate code is generated to facilitate transactions through cards.
- The RBI in September **prohibited merchants from storing customer card details on their servers with effect from January 1, 2022**, and mandated the adoption of **CoF tokenisation** as an alternative to card storage.
- The RBI had in March 2020 had stipulated that authorised payment aggregators and the merchants onboarded by them should not store actual card data with a view to minimise vulnerable points in the system.

- On a request from the industry, it extended the **deadline to end-December 2021** as a one-time measure.

#### India Post Payments Bank partners HDFC Bank for banking products, services in semi-urban and rural areas:

- India Post Payments Bank (IPPB) and HDFC Bank have signed a memorandum of understanding for offering **latter's various banking products and services to customers** of the payments bank in semi-urban and rural areas, focussing on unbanked and underserved segments.
- **Over 4.7 crore customers of IPPB of whom nearly 90 per cent** are residing in rural areas are expected to benefit from this partnership.
- The strategic alliance will enable IPPB to provide affordable and diversified offerings, including access to finance, to its customers through its innovative Doorstep Banking Service.
- With nearly 2 lakh postal service providers (Postmen and Gramin Dak Sevaks) equipped with micro-ATMs and biometric devices, **IPPB caters to the needs and requirements of various customer segments** but is also committed to making digital adoption easier at the last mile by enabling an assisted banking model.
- With this partnership, **HDFC Bank aims to further strengthen its financial inclusion** drive by leveraging the robust and extensive distribution network of **IPPBs 650 branches and over 136,000 banking access points** across India.

#### IndusInd Bank has announced the launch of 'Green Fixed Deposits':

- IndusInd Bank has announced the launch of 'Green Fixed Deposits', whereby the deposit proceeds will be used to finance projects and firms supporting the **United Nations Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs)**.
- These deposits will be offered to both retail and corporate customers.
- The Bank will use the proceeds from these deposits to finance a wide array of sectors falling **under the SDG category** including, energy efficiency, renewable energy, green transport, sustainable food, agriculture, forestry, waste management, and greenhouse gas reduction.
- It is similar to a regular bank deposit, but in addition, depositors **will be issued a 'Green' certificate** as well as an '**Assurance**' certificate confirming the end-use of deposit proceeds at the end of the financial year

#### Indian economy likely to maintain 9% GDP growth this fiscal and in FY23: ICRA:

- **The Indian economy** is expected to maintain real GDP growth of 9 per cent each in FY2022 and FY2023, amidst the uncertainty ignited by the Omicron variant of Covid-19, **according to ICRA**.
- The credit rating agency has estimated the net loss to the **Indian economy from the pandemic at ₹39.30 lakh crore during FY2021-23**.
- ICRA noted that the available data (high frequency indicators) for **Q3 (October-December) FY2022** does not offer convincing evidence that the Monetary Policy Committee's (MPC's) criteria of a durable and

sustainable growth recovery has been met, to confirm a change in the **Monetary Policy stance to neutral in February 2022.**

- Rising consumption will push capacity utilisation above the crucial **threshold of 75 per cent by the end of 2022**, which should then trigger a broad-based pick-up in private sector investment **activity in 2023.**
- The rating agency also expects the visibility of tax revenue growth to spur faster Government spending in 2022.

#### **Karnataka govt partners with NPCI and SBI for enabling and implementing 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
- Karnataka government will get e-vouchers delivered to the mobiles of eligible students.
- The voucher code can be received on the feature phone also.
- Students will be able to **redeem e-RUPI at the identified colleges/institutes for the intended purpose of fees payment.**
- e-RUPI is indeed a very powerful tool for governments to use as it allows direct transfer of the benefits to the targeted beneficiary, with safety and security.
- Under this initiative, each transaction is mapped with the beneficiary and the institution, ensuring that the e-voucher can be redeemed by the college where the student has enrolled

#### **Central Bank of India, NPCI tie-up to launch RuPay debit card for corporates:**

- **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.
- This card offers an **ATM withdrawal limit of ₹1 lakh** along with a purchase of **up to ₹3 lakh** at POS or E-Commerce, to its users
- Further, card users can **withdraw up to ₹75,000 at ATMs** abroad and perform purchases globally worth up to **₹3 lakh at POS** and international online merchants.
- Along with **Purchase Protection coverage of ₹2 lakh**, customers using this card will get accidental death and air accident **coverage worth ₹10 lakh and ₹20 lakh respectively** and the Cardholders will be able to earn reward points on every purchase.
- The users of this card will also have access to domestic and international airport lounges twice per quarter and two times a year, respectively.



#### RBI extends direction for PMC Bank till March 2022:

- The Reserve Bank of India (RBI) has extended the validity of its directions for the scam-hit **Punjab and Maharashtra Cooperative (PMC) Bank** from **January 1, 2022 to March 31, 2022**, but it will be subject to review.
- Action with regard to sanction of the scheme of amalgamation of **PMC Bank with Unity Small Finance Bank Ltd. (USFB)** is in process
- The **RBI had earlier, on November 22, 2021**, issued a draft scheme for amalgamation of the bank, inviting suggestions and objections, till December 10, 2021, from members, depositors and other creditors of PMC Bank and Unity Small Finance Bank.
- Depositors of the Bank, in their suggestions **to the RBI on the draft amalgamation scheme**, want **immediate payment of 25 per cent of the amount** that will remain in their account after the initial payment of up to ₹5 lakh and payment of the balance in three installments over three years.
- The **PMC Depositors Forum** wants **Unity SFB** to pay the same rate of interest to the depositors of the erstwhile PMC Bank as it will pay to its new depositors.
- PMC Bank has been under RBI directions **with effect from the close of business on September 23, 2019**.

#### Gross Non-Performing Asset may climb to 9.5 percent by September 2022 – RBI:

- The **RBI's half-yearly stress tests** indicate that **Gross Non-Performing Asset** may climb from **8.1 percent to 9.5 percent** by **September 2022**
- This has **increased from 6- year low of 6.9 percent in September this year**.
- However, the bad loans would still be in single digits even in a worst-case scenario.
- The **Financial Stability Report released by RBI**, projects that outcomes are the most optimistic since the pandemic broke out.
- It couched with the assurance that banks are adequately capitalized to absorb the credit losses and meet prudential guidelines.
- The **sector's Gross NPA ratio declining from 6.9 percent in September 2021 to 8.2 percent**, a year ago.
- It also warned that the stress test shows Public Sector Banks' gross **NPA's may worsen to 10.5 percent** by September next year.
- In a foreword of the report, RBI Governor Shaktikanta Das announced 'balance sheets of banks remain strong and capital and liquidity buffers are being bolstered to mitigate future shocks.

#### SEBI named Aarati Krishnan as a member of MF advisory panel:

- **Aarati Krishnan**, has been inducted as a member of the **Securities & Exchange Board of India's Advisory Committee on Mutual Funds**.



- The committee, chaired by Usha Thorat, former Deputy Governor of Reserve Bank of India, advises SEBI on matters related to mutual fund regulation to ensure investor protection, development of the industry and disclosure requirements.
- It suggests measures required to be taken to render the legal framework for mutual funds transparent and simple for investors and constituents.
- The committee has **24 members comprising CEOs** of leading mutual fund houses as well as representatives from academia, exchanges, consumer interest groups, fund trustees, rating agencies, distribution firms and media.

#### **RBI extends relaxation for periodic updation of KYC by three months:**

- The Reserve Bank of India (RBI) has **extended** the relaxation it provided for operation of customer accounts of regulated entities where periodic **updation of KYC** (know your customer) is due and pending as on date, **from December 31, 2021, till March 31, 2022.**
- RBI informed no restrictions on operations of such accounts **shall be imposed till March 31, 2022**, for the aforementioned reason alone, unless warranted under instructions of any regulator/enforcement agency/court of law, etc.
- **"Regulated Entities" (REs) include all banks, all India financial institutions**, all non-banking finance companies, miscellaneous non-banking companies and residuary non-banking companies, all payment system providers/system participants and prepaid payment instrument issuers, and all authorised persons including those who are agents of money transfer service scheme, regulated by the regulator.
- **REs' KYC policy includes four key elements** – customer acceptance policy, risk management, customer identification procedures, and monitoring of transactions.
- As part of customer due diligence (CDD) procedure in the case of individuals, REs shall obtain Aadhaar number;
- permanent account number or the equivalent e-document thereof or Form No. 60 as defined in Income-tax rules, 1962;
- And such other documents including in respect of the nature of business and financial status of the customer, or the equivalent e-documents thereof as may be required by them.

#### **SBI signs a MoU with Usha International to empower women entrepreneurs.**

- State Bank of India (SBI) has signed a Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) with Usha International Limited (UIL) for empowering women entrepreneurs by providing financial assistance named 'NAVCHETNA'.

- The branches of the SBI (Uttarakhand, Delhi, Western UP, and NCR Haryana branches) will provide financial help for women entrepreneurs to **Usha Silai School**.
- The financial assistance will be provided under the **Joint Liability Group model**.

#### IDFC FIRST Bank launches India's first standalone metal debit card.

- **IDFC FIRST Bank launched - 'FIRST Private Infinite'** India's first standalone **metal debit card or black card** in partnership with **Visa**.
- FIRST Private Infinite is a lifetime free card specifically for customers who are part of the Bank's FIRST Private program, premium savings and wealth offering.
- **DBS Bank India Introduces an Industry-First Digital & Paperless Trade Financing Solution.**
- DBS Bank India has introduced a paperless proposition for the financing of domestic invoices by buyers and sellersto reduce processing turn-around time and for efficient business.
- DBS Domestic Trade Financing leverages Electronic Way (Eway) bill verification for digitalising and simplifying trade transactions
- The bank has completed its first end-to-end digital Purchase Invoice Finance (PIF) transaction for Lincon Polymers Pvt. Ltd.
- The bank now digitally validates the e-Way Bill (i.e. proof of movement of goods) for the purpose of establishing the genuineness of underlying trade transactions.
- The adoption of this approach has enabled DBS to process transactions quicker without the need to obtain underlying physical documents.

#### World Bank approves \$135 million Loan to Improve Efficiency, Reliability of Electricity Supply in West Bengal.

- International Bank for Reconstruction and Development (**IBRD**), under **World Bank Group**, has approved a **USD 135 million loan to West Bengal (WB)** to improve the operational efficiency and reliability of electricity supply in selected areas in the state.
- The main aim of this project is to strengthen distribution networks, invest in smart-grid technologies, and ensure financial sustainability of the state discom (distribution companies).

#### Kotak Mahindra Bank tie-up with Worldline for Easy EMI Services

- **Kotak Mahindra Bank** announced a tie-up with Europe-based payment and transactional service firm, **Worldline** to enable **Equated Monthly Installment (EMI) payments via Kotak debit cards in India**.
- The Kotak debit card EMI is available to all customers, retailers, fashion and electronic products to pay instalments easily using Worldline Point of Sale (POS) terminals.

#### Kotak General Insurance partners Vasai Vikas Sahakari Bank to offer Insurance

- Kotak Mahindra General Insurance Company Ltd and Vasai Vikas Sahakari Bank Ltd has entered into a partnership to provide wide range of insurance solutions and products to the bank's customers.
- Vasai Vikas Sahakari Bank will offer Kotak General Insurance's comprehensive suite of general and health insurance products to its customers across 21 branches.

#### Bank of Baroda launches bob World Wave - Wearable Payment Solution

- **Bank of Baroda (BOB)** in partnership with **National Payments Corporations of India (NPCI)** launched **bob World Wave - wearable line of products for payment solutions, integrated with a complete health ecosystem.**
- The bob World Wave wearable device integrated with **SpO2, body temperature, heart rate and blood pressure monitoring features.**
- The device will provide contactless payments of **up to Rs. 5,000 in all Near-Field Communication (NFC) enabled Point of Sale (PoS) devices** and also enable payments above Rs 5000 using the PIN.
- The Bob wave world line of products will be priced between **Rs. 100 and Rs. 5,000.**

#### Oriental Insurance company ltd. categorised as public shareholder in Axis Bank

- **Axis Bank** has announced the approval to reclassify **The Oriental Insurance Company Ltd (OICL)** from promoter category to public category shareholder in the bank.
- At present, Oriental Insurance Company Ltd (OICL) holds a **0.16% stake in Axis Bank.**

#### **CURRENT AFFAIRS: NATIONAL NEWS**

#### Government forms 5-member panel to monitor Central Vista project

- The **Union government** has formed a **five-member committee** to ensure timely completion of various projects executed under the **Central Vista Redevelopment Plan.**
- To directly oversee the **Rs 20,000 crore project** for a period of two years includes Rs 971 crore's a new Parliament building and Rs 13,450 crore's new residences of the prime minister and the vice president.
- **Former Finance Secretary Ratan P Watal** has been appointed the **Chairman** of the **five-member Central Vista Oversight Committee.**

#### **Other member of the panel are :**

- Deputy Comptroller and Auditor General (CAG) -P K Tiwari,
- Former director of L&T – Shailendar Roy
- IIT Delhi professor – Prof. Mausam
- Joint secretary of Ministry of Housing and Urban Affairs

#### Prasar Bharati enters into MoU with IIT, Kanpur to develop Next Generation Broadcast solution

- **Information and Broadcasting Minister Anurag Thakur**, has announced that, **Prasar Bharati** has entered into a Memorandum of Understanding with **IIT, Kanpur** to develop **Next Generation Broadcast solution for digital terrestrial broadcasting** consistent with emerging standards such as 5G broadcast.
- In a written reply to the Lok Sabha, Mr Thakur, sanction for the proof of concept of Next Generation broadcasting has also been conveyed to IIT, Kanpur.
- The selection of an appropriate **Next Generation broadcast technology and digital terrestrial transmission roadmap of Doordarshan** depends upon evaluation of this proof of concept.

#### PM Modi to inaugurate InFINITY Forum thought leadership Forum on FinTech

- **Prime Minister Narendra Modi** will inaugurate **Infinity Forum**, a thought leadership Forum on FinTech, on 3rd of December via video conferencing.
- The event is being hosted by **International Financial Services Centres Authority** under the aegis of Government of India in collaboration with **GIFT City and Bloomberg**.
- **Indonesia, South Africa and the U.K.** are partner countries in the first edition of the Forum.
- Infinity Forum will bring together leading minds of the **world in policy, business, and technology**.
- They will discuss and come up with actionable insight into how technology and innovation can be leveraged by the FinTech industry for inclusive growth and serving humanity at large.
- The agenda of the **Forum will focus on the theme of Beyond**.
- It will have various **sub-themes** including FinTech beyond boundaries, with governments and businesses focussing beyond the geographical boundaries in the development of global **stack to promote financial inclusiveness, FinTech beyond Finance**, by having convergence with emerging areas such as to drive sustainable development and FinTech Beyond Next, with focus on how Quantum Computing could impact the nature of Fintech industry in the future and promote new opportunities.

#### Farm Laws Repeal Bill 2021 passed in Parliament as Lok Sabha, Rajya Sabha approve it on Day 1 of Winter Session

- Parliament passed **the Farm Laws Repeal Bill, 2021**, with the Lok Sabha and the Rajya Sabha approving it on **the first day of the Winter Session**.
- The bill seeking to withdraw the three farm bills was moved in Lok Sabha by **Agriculture Minister Narendra Singh Tomar** amid ruckus by the Opposition.
- It was **passed in the Lower House without discussion as Speaker Om Birla**, debate is not possible in a noisy scene.

- The three Laws sought to be repealed include **the Farmers (Empowerment and Protection) Agreement on Price Assurance and Farm Services Act, 2020, the Farmers' Produce Trade and Commerce (Promotion and Facilitation) Act, 2020 and the Essential Commodities (Amendment) Act, 2020.**
- Later, the Bill was introduced in the Upper House by Minister Narendra Singh Tomar in the post-lunch session, which was passed amidst noisy scenes.

#### Government approved strategic disinvestment of Central Electronics Ltd

- Government has approved the strategic disinvestment of **Central Electronics Limited.**
- **The Cabinet Committee on Economic Affairs**, CCEA empowered Alternative Mechanism comprising Road Transport and Highways Minister Nitin Gadkari, Finance Minister Nirmala Sitharaman and Science and Technology Minister Dr Jitendra Singh, has approved the **highest price bid of M/s Nandal Finance and Leasing Private Limited for sale of 100 percent equity shareholding of Government of India in Central Electronics Limited.**
- The winning bid is for **210 crore sixty thousand rupees.** The process for disinvestment of Central Electronics Limited commenced in 2016 with the in-principle approval of CCEA.
- The entire disinvestment process has been carried out in a transparent manner, through multi-layered decision making involving **Inter-Ministerial Group, Core Group of Secretaries on Disinvestment** and the empowered Alternative Mechanism at the apex Ministerial level.

#### NITI Aayog releases report on Online Dispute Resolution policy for speedy access to justice

- NITI Aayog has pushed for **Online Dispute Resolution (ODR) for speedy access to justice.**
- NITI Aayog has released the report **Designing the Future of Dispute Resolution: the ODR Policy Plan for India**, to scale dispute avoidance, containment, and resolution online.
- The rollout of the recommendations in the report can help make **India a world leader in using technology and innovation through ODR**, for effective access to justice for every individual.
- The report is a culmination of the action plan made **by a committee constituted at the peak of the Covid crisis by NITI Aayog** on ODR in 2020 and chaired by **Supreme Court Justice A K Sikri.**

#### Production Linked Incentive of Rs. 120 crore is provided for Indian manufacturers of drone and drone components

- **The Production-Linked Incentive (PLI) Scheme** for drones and drone components has been notified on 30 Sep 2021 to push the production of drones.
- An incentive of **Rs. 120 crore has been provided for Indian manufacturers of drone** and drone components on the basis of their value addition in India.
- The incentive shall be provided over three financial years commencing from 2021-22.

- The PLI that can be claimed by a manufacturer is **20% of the value addition by such manufacturer**. The PLI rate is constant at **20% for all three years**.
- Minimum value addition is specified as **40% of net sales**
- Eligibility norm for **Micro, Small and Medium Enterprises (MSME) and startups** is specified as **Rs. 2crore** of annual sales revenue for **drone manufacturers** and **Rs. 50 lakhs** of annual sales revenue for drone component manufacturers.
- PLI for a beneficiary is capped at **25% of the total annual outlay** to allow widening of the number of beneficiaries.

#### 21.52 crore loans extended to women borrowers under Pradhan Mantri Mudra Yojana (PMMY)

- As **21.52 crore loans** have been extended to women borrowers by **Member Lending Institutions (MLIs)** under the **Pradhan Mantri Mudra Yojana (PMMY)** since inception of the Scheme.
- This was stated by Union Minister of **State for Finance Dr Bhagwat Kisanrao Karad** in a written reply to a question in Rajya Sabha
- As per the existing guidelines, any individual who is otherwise eligible to take loan and has a business plan for non-farm income generating activities in sectors such as manufacturing, trading, services and activities allied to agriculture and whose credit need is up to **Rs.10 lakh** is **eligible to avail credit under the Scheme**.

#### NITI Aayog organises knowledge sharing workshop on Natural Farming

- As a part of **Azadi Ka Amrit Mahotsav to celebrate and commemorate 75 years** of progressive India, NITI Aayog is organizing a series of events from November 2021 to April 2022.
- In this connection, a national workshop on Natural Farming was organized by Agriculture vertical, NITI Aayog on 30th November 2021 involving **Krishi Vigyan Kendras across India under the Chairmanship by Dr. Rajiv Kumar, Vice Chairman, NITI Aayog**
- An exclusive website on natural farming developed by NITI Aayog was launched by Dr. Rajiv Kumar, Vice Chairman, NITI Aayog.
- The website covers **information regarding natural farming including coverage of the practice in India**, various schemes and initiatives by Central and State Governments, success stories from farmers and relevant publications among others.
- The website can be accessed at <https://naturalfarming.niti.gov.in/>

#### Centre forms three-member committee to review criteria for EWS quota : Ex-Finance Secretary Ajay Bhushan Pandey to Head Panel



- On November 30, The **Ministry of Social Justice and Empowerment** announced the **Centre** has formed a **three-member committee** to review the **criteria for reservation for the Economically Weaker Sections (EWS) category**.
- **Committee Members:**
  - Jay Bhushan Pandey – former finance secretary, GOI (Chairman)
  - Prof. V K Malhotra – Member secretary of Indian Council of Social Science Research (ICSSR)
  - Shri Sanjay Sanyal – Principal economic advisor to GOI (Member Convenor)
- The committee has been asked to complete its work within three weeks.
- The government constituted the committee in accordance with the commitment given to the Supreme Court to revisit the criteria for determining the economically weaker sections (EWS) in terms of the provisions of the explanation to Article 15 of the Constitution.
- The committee will have to review the criteria for determining the EWS category while keeping in mind the Supreme Court observations dated October 21, 2021.
- It will revisit the criterion in determining EWS category keeping in view the observations of the Supreme Court.
- It will also examine various approaches so far followed in the country for identifying economically weaker sections, and recommend criteria that may be adopted for identifying EWS category in future.

#### PM Narendra Modi inaugurate InFinity Forum

- On Dec 03, 2021, Prime Minister **Shri Narendra Modi** will inaugurate **InFinity Forum**, a thought leadership Forum on **FinTech** via video conferencing.
- The two-day event is being hosted by **International Financial Services Centres Authority (IFSCA)**, under the aegis of Government of India in collaboration with GIFT City and Bloomberg.
- **Indonesia, South Africa** and the **U.K.** are partner countries in the first edition of the Forum.
- **Objective:**
  - To develop a strong global connection and focus on the needs of the Indian economy as well as to serve as an international financial platform for the entire region and the global economy as a whole.

#### 'Bijli Utsav' organized by REC in Assam as part of Azadi Ka Amrit Mahotsav

- As part of 'Azadi Ka Amrit Mahotsav' – to celebrate **75 years of Independence**, REC Limited, a public infrastructure finance company under the Ministry of Power organized a '**Bijli Utsav**' in **Sonapur** village of **Kamrup** district and adjoining villages in **Assam**.
- REC Limited is a **Navratna NBFC** focusing on **Power Sector Financing and Development** across India. Established in **1969**, REC Limited has completed over fifty years in the area of its operations.

- It provides financial assistance to state electricity boards, state governments, central/state power utilities, independent power producers, rural electric cooperatives and private sector utilities.
- Its business activities involve financing projects in the complete power sector value chain; different types of projects include Generation, Transmission, Distribution and Renewable Energy segments

#### President of India has inaugurated ceremony of fifth International Ambedkar Conclave

- The President of India, Ram Nath Kovind, has inaugurated the **fifth International Ambedkar Conclave**, being **organised by the Forum of SC and ST Legislators** and Parliamentarians and **Ambedkar Chamber of Commerce**, (December 2, 2021) in New Delhi.
- This Forum is constantly highlighting issues of social and economic justice and playing an important role in spreading the thoughts and ideas of Dr Ambedkar.
- **Article 46 of the Constitution** directs that the State shall develop the educational and economic interests of the Scheduled Castes and the Scheduled Tribes with special care
- Also, in this article, the State has been directed to protect them from social injustice and all forms of exploitation.
- A number of institutions and procedures have been put in place to give effect to these guidelines. There has been lot of improvements. But a lot remains to be done by our country and society.

#### Ministry of Culture implements Scheme of Financial Assistance for the Development of Buddhist/Tibetan Culture and Art under "Kala Sanskriti Vikas Yojna (KSVY)

- The Ministry of Culture implements a financial grant scheme known as **Scheme of Financial Assistance for the Development of Buddhist/Tibetan Culture and Art** for the purpose of strengthening the voluntary Buddhist/Tibetan Organizations including the monasteries engaged in propagation and the scientific development of Buddhist/Tibetan Culture and tradition and **in research in related fields**.
- Under this scheme, financial assistance is provided to the voluntary **Buddhist and Tibetan Organizations** including Monasteries engaged in the propagation and scientific development of Buddhist/ Tibetan Culture and tradition, located in any part of the country.
- The quantum of funding is **Rs.30.00 lakhs per year for an organization**.
- The Expert Advisory Committee (EAC) on the scheme is empowered to recommend the amount beyond the maximum limit but not exceeding Rs.1.00 crore from this scheme.

#### IIIT-Hyderabad's incubation centre bags ₹5 cr grant from Startup India

- The Centre for Innovation and Entrepreneurship (CIE) of **IIIT Hyderabad** has won a **₹5-crore** grant under the Startup India Seed Fund Scheme run by the **Department for Promotion of Industry and Internal Trade (DPIIT)**, Government of India.

- The CIE incubates early-stage technology startups in deep-tech areas such as artificial intelligence, machine learning, robotics and blockchain.
- The funds will enable proof of concept, prototype development, product trials, market entry and commercialisation by providing financial assistance up to **₹25 lakh** to each of the startups
- They are targeting to support **20-25 startups in the next three years through this scheme.**

#### U.S. Senate passes bill to avert government shutdown

- The Democratic-controlled U.S. Senate passed a bill to fund the government through mid-February, **averting the risk of a shutdown after overcoming** a bid by some Republicans to delay the vote in a protest against vaccine mandates.
- The 69-28 vote leaves government funding at current levels through Feb. 18, and **gives Democratic President Joe Biden plenty of time to sign** the measure before funding was set to run out at midnight
- The Senate acted just hours after the **House of Representatives approved the measure, by a vote of 221-212**, with the support of only one Republican.
- The Government Shutdown occurs in the United States when the US Parliament fails to enact a funding legislation. The funding may be for the next fiscal year or temporary.
- The current bill passed is for temporary funding.
- Earlier, **such shutdown occurred during President Obama period (for 16 days), President Bill Clinton period (21 days) and President Donald Trump period (35 days).**
- The shutdown disrupts government programmes and services. This includes closure of institutions and national parks. Also, the major loss occurs due to loss of labour. It also causes significant economic growth.

#### Ola to launch its first electric car in 2023

- Ride-hailing company Ola has **received 1 million reservations for its electric scooter**, Chief Executive Officer **Bhavish Aggarwal**, with first deliveries on track for December 15.
- Aggarwal also **Ola's first electric car will be out in 2023** as the company, backed by **Japan's Softbank Group**, aims to make India a global electric vehicle hub.
- Ola plans to go public in the first half of 2022, **Chief Executive Officer Bhavish Aggarwal**, undeterred by the recent volatility and lack luster listing of some start-ups in the country.
- The company claims to have received a booking of **more than a million orders**. Ola is also likely to raise money of nearly **\$1 billion through an IPO in the near future.**

## Govt to launch SRESHTA Scheme 2021 for development of Scheduled Castes students

- The Centre is set to launch the **Residential Education for Students in High Schools in Targeted Areas (SRESHTA)** scheme.

### Purpose:

- To work for socio-economic upliftment and overall development of Scheduled Castes students.
- The scheme will be launched on **6th December on Mahaparinirvan Diwas** in remembrance of **Dr. B R Ambedkar** as part of the **Azadi Ka Amrit Mahotsav**.

## Narcotic Drugs and Psychotropic Substances (Amendment) Bill, 2021 introduced in Lok Sabha:

- **The Narcotic Drugs and Psychotropic Substances (Amendment) Bill, 2021** was introduced in the Lok Sabha.
- **N.K. Premachandran** of RSP opposed the introduction of the Bill.
- The legislation is in violation of **Article 21**.
- The government is giving retrospective effect to a criminal penal offence.
- BJD leader **Bhartruhari Mahtab** also asked government to redraft the legislation.

## 1st ever India - Russia 22 Ministerial Dialogue underway in New Delhi:

- The first-ever **India Russia 22 Ministerial Dialogue** is underway in **New Delhi**.
- Defence Minister **Rajnath Singh** and External Affairs Minister **Dr. S Jaishankar** are representing the Indian side in the **22 Dialogue** and the Russian side is being represented by their **Foreign Affairs Minister and Defence Minister**.
- Russian President **Vladimir Putin** will arrive in New Delhi on an official visit to India for the **21st India-Russia Annual Summit with Prime Minister Narendra Modi**.
- The leaders will review the state and prospects of bilateral relations and discuss ways **to further strengthen the strategic partnership between the two countries**.
- The Summit will be an opportunity to exchange views on regional, multilateral and international issues of mutual interest. Both leaders will also hold one-on-one talks.
- The Annual Summit meeting between **India and Russia** is the **highest institutionalized dialogue mechanism in the strategic partnership between India and Russia**.
- So far, 20 Annual Summit meetings have taken place alternately in India and Russia.

## EAM S Jaishankar has addressed 5th Indian Ocean Conference in Abu Dhabi:

- **External Affairs Minister Dr S Jaishankar** has stressed on the importance of respecting and facilitating freedom of navigation and overflight and unimpeded commerce in a globalised world, **while addressing the fifth Indian Ocean Conference in Abu Dhabi.**
- As a result of this, there is now an ongoing debate on the changed nature of power and influence whether it is connectivity, technology or trade.
- The Minister pointed out that two developments have significantly heightened uncertainties that the Indian Ocean countries contemplate.
- One is the American withdrawal from Afghanistan and the second is the impact of Covid on a region that is particularly vulnerable to health and economic stresses.
- **Quad** has developed a robust agenda covering many areas including **maritime security, cyber security, climate action, vaccine collaboration, critical and emerging technologies, higher education, and resilient supply chains.**
- The Minister held a meeting with his **UAE counterpart Abdullah bin Zayed Al Nahyan** on the sidelines of the conference in Abu Dhabi.

#### **Raksha Mantri Shri Rajnath Singh attends MSME Conclave organised by Ministry of Defence & SIDM:**

- Raksha Mantri Shri Rajnath Singh has called upon **Micro, Small and Medium Enterprises (MSMEs)** to invest more in **research & development and manufacture** new products & technologies and thereby contribute to the security and progress of the country.
- In the inaugural address at the **MSME Conclave**, organised by Department of Defence Production, Ministry of Defence in partnership with **Society of Indian Defence Manufacturers (SIDM)** in hybrid mode, in **New Delhi.**
- Rajnath Singh urged **MSMEs and SIDM** to create an industrial base in India, on the lines of '**Mittelstand**' (**Mittel-Stunt**) of **Germany**, which has been recognised by the whole world for manufacturing metal equipment.
- These schemes extend financial assistance for development of defence technology and hand-holding by user services, thus providing necessary impetus to **MSMEs, startups and individual innovators.**
- They are being funded with financial grants to provide innovative solutions to the problem statements prepared by the Services and new technologies like **Artificial Intelligence, Data Analytics and Robotics can be used.**
- **Ministry of Defence's** approval of a central sector **scheme for iDEX** with a budgetary support of about **Rs 500 crore** for the next **five years from 2021-22 to 2025-26.**

- The scheme will provide financial assistance to around **300 start-ups/MSMEs/individual innovators** and about **20 partner incubators** through **Defence Innovation Organisation (DIO)**.

#### **NCC launches 'Azadi ki Vijay Shrankhla' and 'Sanskritiyon ka Maha Sangam' to honour bravehearts of 1971 War:**

- **National Cadet Corps (NCC)** is conducting '**Azadi ki Vijay Shrankhla aur Sanskritiyon ka Mahasangam**' event as part of **Azadi ka Amrit Mahotsav**.
- '**Azadi ki Vijay Shrankhla**' is being conducted from November 28 to December 10, 2021 wherein bravehearts of 1971 War are **being honoured at 75 locations throughout the country**.
- Out of these 75 locations, five have been earmarked for live webcast on Gallantry Awards portal (<https://www.gallantryawards.gov.in/>).
- '**Sanskritiyon ka Maha Sangam**', a special national integration camp will be conducted in Delhi wherein candidates from all over the country will participate in cultural exchange.
- The finale of the event will be conducted at the NCC Camp Auditorium in the national capital where the cadets of border and coastal areas will showcase the beautiful local dances of their respective states and integration song which will be sung in 22 languages.
- The objectives of this mega event are **to felicitate the family members of the bravehearts of 1971 War at 75 locations and showcase the same to entire Nation**.
- The event will also showcase cultural diversity of India, especially from border and coastal areas where NCC has been **introduced recently to strengthening 'Unity in Diversity'**.

#### **AZADI KA DIGITAL MAHOTSAV:**

- As the nation celebrates **75 years of independence with Azadi Ka Amrit Mahotsav**, MyGov has lauded the citizens who actively participated in the **MyGov challenges, shared their logo ideas, and helped the government in formulation of policies and programmes**.
- MyGov was launched by Prime Minister Shri Narendra Modi, just two months after he assumed office, as Government of India's principal online citizen engagement platform which collaborates with multiple Government bodies/ Ministries to engage with citizens for policy formulation and seeks the opinion of people on issues/ topics of public interest and welfare.
- As enunciated by the Prime Minister in many speeches, including in his speech from the Red Fort, MyGov aims to promote '**Jan Bhagidari**' or **participative governance**.
- **Logos and slogans for prominent national programs such as Swachh Bharat, 100 crore vaccination, Digital India campaign, and National Education Policy** were also crowdsourced from the MyGov platform.
- Yaseen Haroon Sudesara for the '**100 cr Vaccination Logo**', Prashant Mishra for '**Lokpal**', Sai Ram Goud Ediji for the '**Bamboo Mission Logo**', and Rana Bhaumik for the '**Digital India**' logo.



- MyGov 'Saathi' (companions) who actively contributed to MyGov even during the COVID-19 pandemic were also felicitated by Hon'ble Minister of State, Culture, Ms. Meenakshi Lekhi.
- The winners include: Nagara Ju from Jagital, Telangana, Anoop Mishra from Indore, Rushikesh Rajendra Ugale from Nassik, Sanjay Sarkar from Raiganj, and Suthahar P from Chennai.
- **Innovation Challenge on e-waste Management was won by Amit Sharma, and Aruna Kumari; Drug Discovery Hackathon was won by Dr KaliRajan Rajagopal**

#### **Union Finance Minister Smt. Nirmala Sitharaman inaugurates DRI's 64th Foundation Day Celebrations:**

- The Directorate of Revenue Intelligence (DRI), the apex anti-smuggling intelligence and investigation agency functioning under the aegis of **the Central Board of Indirect Taxes and Customs (CBIC)**, **celebrated its 64th Founding Day**
- The celebration commenced with Union Minister for Finance & Corporate Affairs, Smt. Nirmala Sitharaman inaugurating a function at the **Ambedkar International Centre, New Delhi**.
- The finance minister has lauded DRI's compact strength of about **800 officers** for their relentless efforts despite the imminent risks and expressed her respect and condolences to the brave hearts of DRI who lost their lives during the pandemic.
- The Union Finance Minister unveiled the **"Smuggling in India Report 2020-21"** which analyses organised trends on topics such as smuggling of gold, narcotics drugs and psychotropic substances, wildlife etc., commercial frauds and international enforcement operations & cooperation
- The **Founding Day** celebrations were also followed by **7th Regional Customs Enforcement Meeting (RCEM) for effectively engaging with partner Customs organisations** and International agencies like World Customs Organisation, Interpol, UN Office on Drugs and Crime (UNODC) and Regional Intelligence Liaison Office – Asia Pacific (RILO AP).
- The RCEM was **attended by representatives of six countries physically and more than 10 Countries virtually**.

#### **Union Minister for Tourism Shri Kishan Reddy inaugurates Tourist Facilitation Center and Public Utilities on Colva Beach:**

- Union Minister for Tourism **Shri G Kishan Reddy** inaugurated **tourist facilitation center and public utilities and changing room on Colva Beach in South Goa**.
- It was constructed as part of Development of Coastal Circuit II projects under the **Swadesh Darshan scheme by the Ministry of Tourism, Government of India**.

- The Minister also unveiled foundation stone plaques for tourism infrastructure development works, parking and illumination at Colva and Benaulim beaches, and construction of public amenities at beaches in South Goa at a function held at Colva Residency, Colva Beach.
- The beaches of Colva and Benaulim are among the world's famous beaches.
- Located along the coastal belt of Goa, these beaches are visited both by the domestic and international tourists throughout the year.
- Ministry of Tourism under Government of India has sanctioned funds under **Swadesh Darshan Scheme – II** since the areas demand proper **development, upgradation plan, facelift which can accommodate all touristic facilities for boosting the tourism industry in Goa.**
- **Swadesh Darshan Scheme:** is a Central sector scheme launched by the Ministry of Tourism, Government of India, for the integrated development of theme-based tourist circuits.
- The scheme aims for integrated development of theme-based tourist circuits in the country. The scheme is envisioned to synergize with other Government of India schemes like **Swachh Bharat Abhiyan, Skill India, Make in India etc.**
- with the idea of positioning the tourism sector as a major engine for job creation, driving force for economic growth, and building synergy with various sectors to enable tourism to realise its potential.

#### MeitY Startup Hub celebrates the Iconic week of “Azadi Ka Amrit Mahotsav” with its Tech-Startup Summit:

- As part of **“Azadi Ka Amrit Mahotsav”** celebrations, MeitY Startup Hub held its **Tech-Startup Summit** earlier this week.
- **MeitY Startup Hub (MSH)**, an initiative of the Ministry of Electronics & IT (MeitY), **focussed on promoting technology innovation, start-ups, and creation of intellectual properties.**
- It ensures synergies among all the incubation centres, Centres of Excellence on Emerging Technologies for facilitating crisscrossing of technology resources, sharing best practices and ideas to foster creativity as well as research skills combined with entrepreneurship, thus striving for **“Atmanirbharat” or “Self-sufficiency”** propagated by the Government of India through its initiative – **Azadi Ka Amrit Mahotsav (AKAM).**
- The Tech- Summit was held with 2 Plenary Panel discussions, a **Startup Expo and BSF-Bhumi Challenge Award Ceremony**

#### President's standard to be awarded to 22 killer squadron:

- **Shri Ram Nath Kovind, the Honourable President of India, will award the President's Standard to the 22nd Missile Vessel Squadron**, also known as the Killer Squadron at a ceremonial parade to be held at Naval Dockyard, Mumbai on 08 Dec 21.
- To mark the occasion, a **Special Day Cover** along with a **commemorative stamp** will also be released by the **Postal Department**.
- The ceremony is expected to be attended by the Governor, Chief Minister of Maharashtra and Chief of the Naval Staff as well as several other civil and military dignitaries.
- The President's Standard is the highest honour bestowed by the **Supreme Commander to a military unit in recognition of the service rendered to the nation**.
- The Indian Navy was awarded the President's Colours on 27 May 1951 by the then President of India, Dr Rajendra Prasad.
- The President's Standard is the same honour as the President's Colours, awarded to a relatively smaller military formation or unit.
- The **22nd Missile Vessel Squadron** was formally established at Mumbai in Oct 1991 with ten Veer Class and three Prabal Class missile boats.
- The President's Standard being awarded to this fearless formation is a well-deserved tribute to the men who, over the years have rendered invaluable service to the nation as a part of the '**Killer Squadron**'.

#### **Lok Sabha passes National Institute of Pharmaceutical Education and Research (Amendment) Bill, 2021**

- The Lok Sabha has passed the **National Institute of Pharmaceutical Education and Research (Amendment) Bill, 2021**
- The Government is taking all out efforts to make the country the pharma capital of the world. Pointing out the export of vaccines and medicines for **Covid to over 80 countries**.
- More than 40 percent of the generic medicines being made available in the **US are made in India and also 60-percent of all vaccines in the world have been manufactured in India**.
- The two product-linked incentives programmes that are being implemented have benefitted for the pharma industry a lot during the Covid times.
- The clinical trials of the DNA-based vaccine against Covid-19 have been completed and the manufacturing has begun and two more indigenous vaccines are undergoing clinical trials.

#### **AAI to spend around INR 25,000 crores in next five years for expansion and modification of existing terminals**

- The **aviation sector in India has been affected due to severe disruption caused by the COVID-19 pandemic**.

- The estimated losses incurred by airlines and airports in India in the financial year 2020-21 is approximately Rs.19,564 crore and Rs. 5,116 crores respectively.
- Airports Authority of India (AAI) has taken up a **development programme to spend around INR 25,000 crores in next five years for expansion** and modification of existing terminals, new terminals, expansion or strengthening of existing runways, aprons, Airport Navigation Services (ANS), control towers, technical blocks etc.
- **Three Public Private Partnership (PPP) airports at Delhi, Hyderabad and Bengaluru have undertaken major expansion plan to the tune of INR 30,000 Crores by 2025.** Additionally, INR 36,000 Crores have been planned for investment in the development of new Greenfield airports across the country under PPP mode.
- Government of India has accorded 'in-principle' approval for setting up of 21 Greenfield Airports across the country. So far, eight Greenfield airports namely, Shirdi in Maharashtra, Durgapur in West Bengal, Pakyong in Sikkim, Kannur in Kerala, Orvakal in Andhra Pradesh, Kalaburagi in Karnataka, Sindhudurg in Maharashtra and Kushinagar in Uttar Pradesh have been operationalized.
- Goods and Services Tax (GST) rate has been reduced **from 18% to 5% for domestic Maintenance, Repair and Overhaul (MRO) services.**

**Union Budget 21-22 provided capital outlay of Rs. 5.54 lakh crore, an increase of 34.5% over Budget Estimate of FY 2020-21, to boost economy after COVID-19 pandemic**

- To initiate infrastructure development to boost the economy after COVID-19 pandemic, Union Budget 2021-22 has provided a **capital outlay of Rs. 5.54 lakh crore, an increase of 34.5% over Budget Estimate of FY 2020-21.**
- The Government has also made provision of more than **Rs. 2 lakh crores for States & Autonomous Bodies towards their Capital Expenditure.**
- **National Monetization Pipeline** was also prepared to unlock the value of investments in public sector assets by tapping private capital and efficiencies for delivering infrastructure services.
- **The National Infrastructure Pipeline (NIP) was launched** with projected infrastructure investment of around **Rs. 111 lakh crores during FY 2020-2025** to provide world-class infrastructure across the country, and improve the quality of life for all citizens.
- NIP was launched with 6,835 projects, **which has expanded to over 9,000 projects covering 34 sub-sectors.**

- NIP is a first-of-its-kind, whole-of-government exercise and covers all infrastructure sub- sectors, including MSMEs working in infrastructure sector, as mentioned in Harmonized Master List of Infrastructure Sub-sectors notified by Department of Economic Affairs (DEA).

#### **Scheduled Commercial Banks recover Rs 90 crore from financial frauds in last 5 years**

- Cyber financial frauds in banking primarily relate to frauds that **have taken place on ATM/ debit cards, credit cards and internet banking platforms.**
- This was stated by Union Minister of State for **Finance Dr Bhagwat Kisanrao Karad.**
- As per RBI data on frauds reported **by Scheduled Commercial Banks in the category “Card/Internet – ATM/Debit Cards, Credit Cards and Internet Banking Fraud”** for the last five financial years, based on the date of occurrence of frauds, state-wise and bank-wise
- The Minister further stated that recovery against such financial frauds is an ongoing process and as per RBI data, SCBs have so far recovered an amount of Rs. 90 crore

#### **Swachh Technology Challenge launched to Create an Innovations' Ecosystem in Waste Management**

- **Swachh Bharat Mission-Urban 2.0 (SBM-U 2.0)**, under the aegis of the Ministry of Housing and Urban Affairs (MoHUA), has launched the **Swachh Technology Challenge.**
- The Challenge seeks to harness the entrepreneurial potential of the waste management sector in India and promote an **enabling environment for enterprise development under Swachh Bharat Mission-Urban 2.0.**
- Swachh Technology Challenge, scheduled to run from 6th December 2021 to 15th January 2021, will particularly seek solutions in **four thematic categories, viz.(i) social inclusion, (ii) zero dump (solid waste management), (iii)plastic waste management and (iv)transparency through digital enablement**
- Swachh Bharat Mission-Urban 2.0, launched on 1<sup>st</sup> October, 2021, **aims to achieve the vision of ‘Garbage Free Cities’ over the next five years** through remediation of legacy dumpsites, construction and demolition waste and plastic waste management.
- Additionally, sustainable sanitation through faecal sludge and used water management will be a key focus under SBM-U 2.0.
- Technology has played a critical role in achieving the outcomes under SBM-U's journey in the last seven years with several key initiatives such as Swachhata App, SBM Toilets on Google Maps, etc.
- Recently, **the integrated SBM-Urban MIS portal Swachhatam** and the state-of-art GIS platform were launched under SBM-U 2.0 which will not only take the Mission closer to citizens but will also enable smart data driven decision making, transparency and robustness in Mission implementation.

- The Swachh Technology Challenge is another step towards ensuring smart governance in **SBM-U 2.0 by incentivizing the innovations'** ecosystem to help realize the Prime Minister's vision of '**Garbage Free Cities**'.

#### **Agricultural Technology Management Agency (ATMA) scheme**

- In order to address the key constraints faced by extension system in the country with respect to reducing capacity of public extension services, its lack of decentralized and demand driven focus, **the Innovations in Technology Dissemination component of National Agricultural Technology Project (NATP) was implemented in seven States in the country** namely, Andhra Pradesh, Bihar, Himachal Pradesh, Jharkhand, Orissa, Maharashtra and Punjab through four project districts in each State.
- **This Scheme was approved on 29th March, 2005.**
- The purpose of NATP's innovation in Technology Dissemination Component is to pilot test new organizational arrangements and operational procedures not merely strengthen the existing extension system.

#### **Objectives:**

- To strengthen research – extension – farmer linkages
- To provide an effective mechanism for co-ordination and management of activities of different agencies involved in technology adaption / validation and dissemination at the district level and below.
- To increase the quality and type of technologies being disseminated.
- To move towards shared ownership of the agricultural technology system by key shareholders.
- To develop new partnerships with the private institutions including NGOs.

#### **Salient Features of ATMA:**

- Creating Farmer Advisory Committee to improve feedback.
- Using NGOs to organize farmers.
- Encouraging private sector involvement in technology transfer.
- Validation and refining technologies through research units in the district.
- Bottom-up planning procedure.
- Increased use of Information Technology (ARIS, WWW)
- In-service training to increase staff competence.
- Developing new Public-Private partnerships.
- Formation and strengthening of farmer's interest group

#### **National Food Security Mission**



- **The National Development Council (NDC) in its 53rd meeting held on 29th May, 2007 adopted a resolution to launch a Food Security Mission comprising rice, wheat and pulses to increase the annual production of rice by 10 million tonnes, wheat by 8 million tonnes and pulses by 2 million tonnes by the end of the Eleventh Plan (2011-12).**
- Accordingly, a Centrally Sponsored Scheme, '**National Food Security Mission**' (NFSM), was launched in **October 2007**.
- The Mission met with an overwhelming success and achieved the targeted additional production of rice, wheat and pulses.
- The Mission continued **during 12th Five Year Plan with new targets of additional production of food grains of 25 million tonnes** of food grains comprising of 10 million tonnes rice, 8 million tonnes of wheat, 4 million tonnes of pulses and 3 million tonnes of coarse cereals by the end of 12th Five Year Plan.
- Considering the experience and feedback received from the State's major changes were made in approach, norms of financial assistance and programme implementation strategy which are reflected in the revised operational guidelines.
- Based on past experience and performance of 12th Plan, it has been decided to continue the programme beyond 12th plan i.e. 2017-18 to 2019-20, which is co-terminus with **Fourteenth Finance Commission (FFC) period with new targets to achieve 13 million tonnes** of additional food grains production comprising of Rice – 5 million tonnes, Wheat- 3 million tonnes, Pulses- 3 million tonnes and Coarse Cereals- 2 million tonnes by 2019-20.

#### PM inaugurates mega projects in Gorakhpur, UP

- Prime Minister Narendra Modi **inaugurated three mega projects worth ₹9,600 crore in Gorakhpur in Uttar Pradesh.**
- The projects are set to develop eastern Uttar Pradesh.
- The mega projects include a fertiliser plant in Gorakhpur, revived after remaining shut for more than 30 years, to achieve self-sufficiency in production of urea.
- The project has been set up under **Hindustan Urvarak & Rasayan Limited (HURL).**
- The Prime Minister also unveiled AIIMS Gorakhpur besides ICMR-Regional Medical Research Centre (RMRC), Gorakhpur.
- **AIIMS Gorakhpur, which was built at a cost of ₹1,000 crore** and established under **Pradhan Mantri Swasthya Suraksha Yojana**, consists of 750 beds, a medical college and facilities for staff and students.
- The ICMR-Regional Medical Research Centre will help tackle Japanese encephalitis or Acute encephalitis syndrome in the region.

## CURTAIN RAISER PANEX-21

- A Curtain Raiser Event for Humanitarian Assistance and Disaster Relief exercise, PANEX-21, for the member nations of BIMSTEC countries, was held at Kothari Auditorium DRDO Bhawan, **New Delhi on 07 Dec 2021.**
- The exercise is planned to be conducted from 20-22 Dec 21 **at Pune** and will witness participation from subject matter experts and delegates from India, Bangladesh, Nepal, Bhutan, Myanmar, Sri Lanka and Thailand.
- The event was presided over by Mr. Ajay Bhatt, hon'ble Raksha Rajya Mantri in the august presence of many distinguished civilian and military guests.
- Shri Ajay Bhatt drew attention of the participants to the significance attached by India to the BIMSTEC, as part of our **"Neighborhood First" policy**.
- The success of the **last two BIMSTEC Disaster Management Exercises (DMEx-2017 at Delhi and DMEx-2020 at Puri)** speak of the close coordination mechanism that the BIMSTEC nations share
- The exercise will witness conduct of a Seminar, Table Top Exercises & Multi Agency Exercise planned from 20 Dec to 22 Dec 21 at Pune.
- The culmination of the event will be with the capability demonstration by Indian Industries in association with **FICCI** to showcase their capabilities, innovations and range of products available to assist government agencies in planning, preparation and conduct of **Humanitarian Assistance and Disaster Relief operations.**

## Permanent Mission of India to the WTO in Geneva signs tripartite MoU with Centre for Trade and Investment Law, New Delhi

- **The Permanent Mission of India to the WTO in Geneva (PMI)**, the Centre for Trade and Investment Law, New Delhi (CTIL), Indian Institute of Foreign Trade, and the Centre for Trade and Economic Integration of The Graduate Institute, Geneva (CTEI) **signed a tripartite Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) in Geneva** to begin collaboration towards research and capacity-building in the field of international trade law and policy.
- The MOU was signed by India's Ambassador and Permanent Representative H.E. Brajendra Navnit, Prof. James J. Nedumpara, Head, Centre for Trade and Investment Law, and Joost Pauwelyn, Professor of International Law at The Graduate Institute.
- The MOU seeks to provide valuable academic and research opportunities to the professional staff of CTIL and the officials of the Government of India in the field of international trade and investment law.

- The tripartite MoU establishes collaboration channels between CTIL and CTEI while the PMI will play a key facilitative role for activities under the MoU.
- For the next three years, various capacity-building programmes and activities will be carried out under the MoU to enhance the understanding of the government officials and CTIL's **research staff and academics on contemporary issues of international trade** and build support for **India's positions on international trade and investment law**.
- CTIL and CTEI will undertake joint research projects, conferences and workshops in the field of international trade and investment law.

#### Ministry of Civil Aviation mandates Air Suvidha Portal for Ease of Travelling

- The **Ministry of Civil Aviation** and **Ministry of Health & Family Welfare** has mandated **contactless self-declaration at Air Suvidha Portal**, to ensure the smooth passage of international travellers arriving in India.
- The Air Suvidha portal was launched in August 2020 and now has been strengthened to accommodate travel guidelines issued on 30 November 2021.

#### NITI Aayog and CSE release Waste-wise Cities: Best practices in municipal solid waste management

- NITI Aayog Vice Chairperson Dr Rajiv Kumar, CEO Amitabh Kant, Special Secretary Dr K Rajeswara Rao, and Centre for Science and Environment (CSE) Director General Sunita Narain jointly released the report titled "**Waste-wise Cities: Best practices in municipal solid waste management**," a comprehensive knowledge repository of how Indian cities are managing their solid waste.
- The report documents best practices from **28 cities in 15 states** of India.
- The repository is the result of five months of extensive on-ground collective research that was initiated in July 2021.
- These thematic aspects range from source segregation, material recovery and technological innovations to the management of different kinds of wastes and systems such as biodegradables, plastics, e-waste, C&D waste and landfills.

#### Parliament passes Assisted Reproductive Technology (Regulation) Bill, 2021

- **Parliament has passed the Assisted Reproductive Technology (Regulation) Bill, 2021** with the Rajya Sabha approving it. The **Bill has already been passed by the Lok Sabha**.
- The Upper House also passed the Surrogacy (Regulation) Bill, 2020 with amendments moved by the government.
- The Assisted Reproductive Technology (Regulation) Bill, 2021 provides for the regulation and supervision of the **assisted reproductive technology clinics and the assisted reproductive technology banks**.

- The Bill provides that every ART clinic and bank must be registered under the National Registry of Banks and Clinics of India.
- **The Surrogacy (Regulation) Bill, 2020 aims at constituting National Surrogacy Board, State Surrogacy Boards and appointment of appropriate authorities for regulation of the practice and process of surrogacy.**
- The government has also incorporated the recommendations of the Select Committee of Rajya Sabha in the bill.

#### **Lok Sabha passes HC and SC Judges (Salaries & Conditions of Service) Amendment Bill, 2021**

- The Lok Sabha has passed the High Court and **Supreme Court Judges (Salaries and Conditions of Service) Amendment Bill, 2021 by voice vote.**
- The amendment bill seeks to address the anomalies in the disbursement of pension of retired Supreme Court and High Court judges.
- The amendments entitle them to an additional quantum of pension or family pension when they attain a certain age in accordance with a specified scale.
- The scale contains five age brackets with a **minimum age of 80 years.**
- The Government is receiving many suggestions from several sections including retired judges, **NGOs and civil society expressing reservations** against the present Collegium System on the appointment of judges in the higher judiciary.
- Earlier, the Bill was introduced in the **Lower House by Minister Kiren Rijiju** on November 30.

#### **BEE Launches 'Certification Course on Home Energy Audit' Initiative**

- **The Bureau of Energy Efficiency (BEE)** virtually launched "Certification Course on Home Energy Audit (HEA)", during "**National Energy Conservation Week: 8th–14th December 2021**", marked as Iconic Week under "**Azadi ka Amrit Mahotsav**".
- A **Home Energy Audit (HEA)** enables appropriate accounting, quantification, verification, monitoring, and analysis of energy use of various **energy-consuming equipment** and appliances in a house and the submission of a technical report with feasible solutions and recommendations for improving energy efficiency, **with a cost-benefit analysis and action plan to reduce energy consumption.**
- This would ultimately lead to a reduction in energy bills and the carbon footprint of the consumer.
- The certification program will create awareness on importance and benefits of energy audit and energy efficiency and conservation among students from engineering/diploma colleges.
- This will increase employability of youth in the domain of energy efficiency, climate change mitigation, and sustainability.

#### **President of India presents standard to the 22nd Missile Vessel Squadron of the Indian Navy**

- The President of India, Shri Ram Nath Kovind, presented the President's **Standard to the 22nd Missile Vessel Squadron of the Indian Navy** in Mumbai, Maharashtra (December 8, 2021).
- The President noted that the ships of this squadron have been deployed for a multitude of operations.
- They are securing our maritime borders through mission-based deployments.
- They are also undertaking diplomatic missions in the **Gulf of Oman and Persian Gulf and anti-piracy operations**.
- The emerging geopolitical challenges in the Indo-Pacific region present India with an opportunity to play a pivotal role.
- As one of the leading navies of this region, **the Indian Navy** has invested significant effort in meeting all regional commitments and furthering our engagements with partners in the **Indo-Pacific**

## Cabinet Approvals

### (A) Cabinet approves Ken-Betwa Interlinking of Rivers Project:

- The Union Cabinet chaired by the Prime Minister Shri Narendra Modi, has approved the funding and implementation of **Ken-Betwa inter-linking of rivers project**.
- The total cost of Ken-Betwa link project has been **assessed at Rs.44,605 crore at 2020-21 price levels**.
- The Union Cabinet has approved central support of **Rs.39,317 crore for the project**, covering grant of Rs.36,290 crore and loan of Rs.3,027 crore.
- The project will pave the way for more interlinking of river projects in India and also showcase to the world our ingenuity and vision.
- This project involves transfer of water from the Ken to the Betwa River through the construction of **Daudhan Dam and a canal linking the two rivers, the Lower Orr Project, Kotha Barrage -and Bina Complex Multipurpose Project**.
- The project will provide an annual irrigation of 10.62 lakh ha, drinking water supply to a population of about 62 lakhs and also generate **103 MW of hydropower and 27 MW solar power**.
- The Project will be of immense benefit to the water starved Bundelkhand region, spread across the states of **MP and UP**.
- This project will provide enormous benefits to the districts of **Panna, Tikamgarh, Chhatarpur, Sagar, Damoh, Datia, Vidisha, Shivpuri and Raisen of Madhya Pradesh and Banda, Mahoba, Jhansi & Lalitpur of Uttar Pradesh**.

### (B) Cabinet approves continuation of Pradhan Mantri Awaas Yojana – Gramin (PMAY-G) beyond March 2021 till March 2024:

- The Union Cabinet, chaired by the Prime Minister Shri Narendra Modi, has approved the proposal of the Department of Rural Development for continuation of **Pradhan Mantri Awaas Yojana – Gramin (PMAY-G) beyond March 2021** wherein financial assistance is to be provided for the construction of the remaining 155.75 lakh houses, as on 31st March, 2021 under the scheme **within total target of 2.95 crore houses**.
- Continuation of **PMAY-G beyond March 2021 till March 2024** as per the existing norms to complete remaining houses within a cumulative **target of 2.95 crore houses**.
- The total financial implication for construction of the remaining 155.75 lakh houses is Rs. 2,17,257 crore (**Central Share Rs.1,25,106 crore and State Share Rs.73,475 crores**) for achieving cumulative targets of 2.95 crore houses in rural areas under the PMAY-G and an additional requirement of Rs.18,676 Crore towards the interest repayment to **NABARD**.
- The continuation of scheme till March, 2024 ensures that the remaining 155.75 lakh households within overall target of 2.95 crore houses under PMAY-G would be provided assistance for construction of Pucca houses with basic amenities to achieve the objective of “**Housing for All**” in rural areas.
- As on 29th November, 2021, 1.65 crore PMAY-G houses have been constructed out of the total target of 2.95 crore.
- It is estimated that 2.02 crore houses, which is almost equal to SECC 2011 database based Permanent Wait List will be completed by the deadline of 15th August, 2022.
- Therefore, to achieve the **total target of 2.95 crore** houses, the scheme need to be continued till March, 2024.

#### NMCG and c-Ganga organize 6th India Water Impact Summit in hybrid mode

- **The National Mission for Clean Ganga (NMCG)** along with the Centre for Ganga River Basin Management and Studies (c-Ganga) are organizing the 6th edition of the **India Water Impact Summit (IWIS) from 9th December to 14th December 2021**.
- The summit is being organized in a **hybrid mode - online and physically** at the NMCG office, New Delhi and IIT, Kanpur.
- The IWIS 2021 is a five-day event and this year’s **theme is ‘River Resources Allocation “Planning and Management at the Regional Level”**’.
- Last year, **the 5th edition of the India Water Impact Summit (IWIS)** was successfully **organized by the NMCG and c-Ganga** on the theme of comprehensive analysis and holistic management of local rivers and water bodies with the focus on **Arth Ganga - River Conservation Synchronized Development**.
- This year the Summit will **enlighten the participants on the complexities** and peculiarities as well as the scales of managing the rivers across the basin.



- The focus will be on synchronizing river conservation with long term developmental needs by river resource budgeting.
- The systematic assessment, planning, and management of river resources for various human requirements will ensure healthy rivers and scope for optimal and sustainable development by providing municipal water supplies, hydro-energy, recreation and tourism, irrigation, commercial navigation, fisheries, waste management and flood management.
- Hence, to accomplish these multiple goals across the length of large rivers, the IWIS has invited participation of small and large stakeholders in upstream and downstream regions in the context of select Ganga Basin states, namely **Delhi, Uttarakhand, Uttar Pradesh, Bihar, and West Bengal**.
- The IWIS 2021 will provide a knowledge enriching platform to all stakeholders and aim to discuss, debate and develop the model solutions for some of the important challenges before not only Ganga but all rivers and the water sector in India.

#### Launch of Hackathon “**Sprint04: Market-Tech**” under I-Sprint’21

- Towards the closure of the “**Infinity Forum, 2021**”, IFSCA launched the FinTech Hackathon “**Sprint04: Market-Tech**”.
- This hackathon is focussed on the **Capital Market Segment** and is one of its kind being backed by a Regulator.
- It is being conducted virtually and be open to **eligible FinTechs from across the Globe**.
- Following the announcement made by the Hon’ble Finance Minister in Union Budget 2020-21 on supporting a “**World Class FinTech Hub**” at GIFT IFSC, IFSCA had introduced a framework for “**Regulatory Sandbox**” in October 2020 which allows the FinTech entities to have facilities and flexibilities to experiment with innovative FinTech solutions in a live environment with a limited set of real customers for a limited time frame.
- To encourage the promotion of **financial technologies (‘FinTech’) initiatives in financial products** and financial services across the spectrum of banking, insurance, securities, and fund management in IFSCs, IFSCA has launched a series of Hackathons, cutting across these sectors under the banner of I-Sprint’21.
- The finalists of this Hackathon shall be allowed Direct-Entry into IFSCA Regulatory/Innovation Sandbox.
- **Sprint04: Market-Tech is hosted by IFSCA and GIFT city in collaboration with NSE.**
- The Partners to the Hackathon are Zerodha, PWC, ChainFlux, Talent-Sprint, iCreate, IIM-B (NSRCEL), and Invest-India.

#### Power Ministry celebrates Energy Conservation Week under Azadi Ka Amrit Mahotsav

- Power Ministry is celebrating **Energy Conservation Week under Azadi Ka Amrit Mahotsav** from 8th to 14th December
- Various activities are being undertaken by Power CPSUs as part of the celebrations.
- **The Bureau of Energy Efficiency** has been organizing **National Level Painting Competitions** on Energy Conservation for school children.
- This year, **the theme for the competition is 'Azadi ka Amrit Mahotsav: Energy Efficient India' and 'Azadi ka Amrit Mahotsav: Cleaner Planet'.**
- The State level painting competition is being organized from 1st to 10th December in all 36 States and Union Territories of the country, and it will culminate to a National Level Painting on 12th December at New Delhi.
- The winners of the National level competition will be awarded on the occasion of National Energy Conservation Day on 14th December.

#### **PM Modi to inaugurate Saryu Canal National Project in Uttar Pradesh**

- **Prime Minister Narendra Modi will visit Balrampur, Uttar Pradesh and inaugurate the Saryu Nahar National Project.**
- The work on the project started in 1978 but due to lack of continuity of budgetary support, interdepartmental coordination, and adequate monitoring, it got delayed and was not completed even after nearly four decades.
- Prime Minister's vision for farmer welfare and empowerment, and his commitment to prioritize long pending projects of national importance, brought much-needed focus on the project. Consequently, in 2016, the project was brought under Pradhan Mantri Krishi Sinchayee Yojana with the target to complete it in a time-bound manner.
- The renewed focus on the project has resulted in the project being completed in only about four years.
- The Saryu Nahar Project has been built with a total cost of more than nine thousand 800 crore rupees, out of which more than four thousand 600 crore rupees were provisioned in the last four years.
- The project also involves the interlinking **of five rivers - Ghaghara, Saryu, Rapti, Banganga, and Rohini to ensure optimum usage of water resources of the region.**
- The project will provide assured water for irrigation of over 14 lakh hectares of land and benefit about 29 lakh farmers of over six thousand 200 villages.
- It will benefit nine districts of **Eastern Uttar Pradesh namely - Bahraich, Shravasti, Balrampur, Gonda, Siddharthnagar, Basti, Sant Kabir Nagar, Gorakhpur, and Maharajganj.**
- The farmers of the region will now immensely benefit from the upgraded irrigation potential

- They will now be able to grow crops on a larger scale and maximize the agri-potential of the region.

#### 70% Municipal Solid Waste (MSW) processing achieved under Swachh Bharat Mission – Urban

- **Swachh Bharat Mission-Urban (SBM-U)** was launched on 2nd October 2014 with the objective of making all Urban Local Bodies (ULBs) in the country **Open Defecation Free (ODF)**, scientific management of all Municipal Solid Waste (MSW) generated therein and change in behaviour.
- Under SBM-U, out of 4,372 ULBs across the country, 4,371 have been certified ODF, except for one ULB of Purulia in West Bengal. Processing of MSW has increased from 18 per cent in 2014 to 70 per cent in 2021.
- Through a Jan Andolan approach, there is perceptible change in behaviour towards swachhata in urban areas.
- **Swachh Bharat Mission (SBM-U) 2.0** has been launched on 1st October, 2021 with a **vision of achieving 100 per cent 'Garbage Free', status for all cities.**
- The following specific objectives are targeted to be achieved under SBM-U 2.0.
- Ensuring cleanliness and hygiene in public places to make all cities clean and garbage free, with 100% scientific processing of MSW.
- Reducing air pollution arising out of SWM activities, through effective management of C&D waste, and mechanical sweeping.
- Phased reduction in use of single-use plastic.
- Remediation of all legacy dumpsites.

#### Finance Minister Smt. Nirmala Sitharaman has participated in G-20 Seminar on “Recover Together, Recover Stronger”

- Union Minister for Finance and Corporate Affairs Smt. **Nirmala Sitharaman** has participated virtually from New Delhi in the **G20 International Seminar hosted in Bali by the G20 Presidency of Indonesia.**
- G20's theme for **the year, “Recover Together, Recover Stronger”**, the Finance Minister stressed on the fact that for a strong, sustainable, balanced and inclusive recovery of the global economy, it is imperative to ensure collective progress of all countries.
- Towards achieving this goal, the critical role of multilateralism and collective action.
- Sitharaman also underlined the importance of **Inclusion, Investment, Innovation and Institutions** to support the path of global recovery.
- The finance minister emphasised on the importance of ensuring affordable and equitable access to vaccines and therapeutics to bridge the divergences being witnessed in the global economic recovery.

- In this context, Smt. Sitharaman highlighted that so far India has administered over **1.25 billion doses** of vaccines and supplied more than 72 million vaccine doses to over 90 countries, including by way of grant thereby reflecting India's commitment to co-ordinated global action.

### "Main Bhi Digital 3.0" campaign aimed at digital onboarding of Street Vendors who are provided loans under PM SVANidhi Scheme

- Digital on boarding and training of Street Vendors (SVs) is an integral part of **PM Street Vendor's AtmaNirbharNidhi (PM SVANidhi) Scheme**. Lending Institutions (LIs) have been instructed to issue a durable QR Code & UPI ID at the time of disbursement and train the beneficiaries in conduct of digital transactions.
- In order to give further impetus to the digital onboarding and training of beneficiaries, Ministry of Housing & Urban Affairs (MoHUA) and **Ministry of Electronics & Information Technology (MeitY)** jointly launched '**Main Bhi Digital 3.0**', to complement the efforts of LIs in adoption of digital transactions by the PM SVANidhi beneficiaries.
- "**Main Bhi Digital 3.0**" campaign is aimed at digital onboarding of Street Vendors (SVs) who have already been provided loans under PM SVANidhi Scheme.
- An Integrated IT Platform has been developed for implementation of this Scheme. The application process is fully online. SVs can apply for loan directly through PM SVANidhi Portal.
- The application can also be submitted at **Municipal Offices and Common Service Centres (CSCs)**.
- In addition, the SVs can approach municipal functionaries or representatives of Lending Institutions to apply through **PM SVANidhi mobile App**.

### Government sets target to raise the share of natural gas in energy mix to 15% in 2030

- **The Minister of State for Petroleum and Natural Gas, Shri Rameswar** in the Lok Sabha has informed that the Government has set a target to raise the share of natural gas in energy mix to 15% in 2030 from about 6.7% now.
- To achieve the target, following initiatives have been taken: -
- Expansion of National Gas Grid to about 35,000 Km from current 20,000 Km.
- Expansion of CGD network - 11th CGD round launched on 17.09.2021. After completion of
- 11th city gas distribution (CGD) round, 96% of India's population and 86% of its geographic area would be covered under CGD network.
- Setting up of LNG Terminals.
- Allocation of domestic gas to CNG (T) / PNG (D) in no cut category.

- Allowing marketing and pricing freedom to gas produced from high pressure/high temperature areas, deep water & ultra-deep water and from coal seams.
- SATAT initiatives to promote Bio-CNG.
- Considering the demand of natural gas across sectors and the possibility of price of LNG coming down in future, current high prices do not threaten India's goal to boost the use of gas in its energy mix.

#### Education Ministry has launched mobile app called Bhasha Sangam

- **The Education Ministry has launched a mobile app called Bhasha Sangam** in order to help people acquire basic conversation ability in languages other than one's mother tongue to at least 75 lakh people.
- This language learning initiative has been taken under **Ek Bharat -Shrestha Bharat Programme as part of Azadi Ka Amrit Mahotsav**.
- The App has more than 100 sentences of common usage, both in text and audio format, in 22 Indian languages.
- During the Azadi Ka Amrit Mahotsav period, the Ministry aims to teach 100 sentences in an Indian language other than ones mother tongue to at least 75 lakh people.
- In addition, another **mobile app for Ek Bharat -Shrestha Bharat** quiz has also been launched.

#### UN General Assembly grants Observer Status to International Solar Alliance

- On December 9, 2021, India's **Permanent Ambassador to the UN, T S Tirumurti** announced The **United Nations General Assembly (UNGA)** has granted Observer Status to the **International Solar Alliance**.
- It has been taken based on the UNGA's **Sixth Committee report**.
- The fourth general assembly of the International Solar Alliance (ISA), was held in October 2021.
- A total of 108 countries participated in the Assembly, including 74 Member Countries and 34 Observer and Prospective Countries, 23 Partner Organizations and 33 Special Invitee Organisations.

#### Rajya Sabha takes up Delhi Special Police Establishment (Amendment) Bill, 2021:

- Rajya Sabha is now taking up the **Delhi Special Police Establishment (Amendment) Bill, 2021**.
- Amidst protest by Opposition, Dr Jitendra Singh, minister of state independent charge, Personnel Public Grievances and Pension, moved the **Bill further to amend the Delhi Special Police Establishment Act, 1946, as passed by Lok Sabha**.
- Introducing the Bill, Dr Singh, the nation is faced with the triple menace of corruption, black money and international crime.

#### Health Minister Mansukh Mandaviya chairs India Global Forum Healthcare Roundtable in Dubai:

- **Health Minister Mansukh Mandaviya** has chaired India Global Forum Healthcare Roundtable in Dubai.
- Mr Mandaviya, also discussed various issues related to healthcare.

- India has a major role to play in mitigating global health risks.
- India is committed to **ensuring affordable healthcare to all through collaboration and adopting tech-based solutions.**

#### Ministry of Tourism organises webinar on 'Jyotirlingam Temples of Maharashtra':

- **Ministry of Tourism under its Dekho Apna Desh** Initiatives organising webinars on various tourism centric subjects, themes etc.
- In continuation under **"75 Destinations with Tour Guides"** a webinar on 'Jyotirlingam Temples of Maharashtra' was conducted today on 11th December 2021.
- The webinar was presented by Regional Level Guide Shri **Umesh Namdev Jadhav.**
- Maharashtra boasts of a large number of popular and revered religious and spiritual places that attracts large number of tourists.
- These shrines enshrining Shiva in the form of a Jyotirlingam and have been revered since time immemorial in the Indian system of beliefs.
- Out of 12 Jyotirlingas, the southernmost of these is located at Rameswaram in Tamilnadu while the northernmost is located in the **Himalayas at Kedarnath in Uttarakhand.**
- The Dekho Apna Desh Webinar Series is presented in technical partnership with National e Governance Department, Ministry of Electronics and Information Technology.
- Dekho Apna Desh Webinar Series is an effort to showcase India's rich diversity under Ek Bharat Shreshtha Bharat.

#### Haiderpur wetland in UP recognised as Ramsar Site

- **Haiderpur Wetland of Western Uttar Pradesh** has been recognised under the **1971 Ramsar Convention on Wetlands**, bringing the total number of such designated areas in the country to **47.**
- **1971 Ramsar Convention on Wetlands:**
- The Ramsar Convention on Wetlands, an international treaty, aims at the conservation and sustainable use of wetlands, named after the city of Ramsar in Iran, the convention was signed in 1971.
- The Ramsar Convention works closely with six other organizations known as international organization partners (IOPs), namely BirdLife International, International Union for Conservation of Nature (IUCN), International Water Management Institute (IWMI), Wetlands International, WWF International, and Wildfowl & Wetlands Trust (WWT).

#### PM addresses depositors in a bank deposit insurance programme in Delhi:

- Prime Minister Shri Narendra Modi addressed a function on **"Depositors First: Guaranteed Time-bound Deposit Insurance Payment up to Rs. 5 Lakh"** in New Delhi.



- Union Finance Minister, MoS Finance and RBI Governor were among those present on the occasion. The Prime Minister also handed over cheques to some of the depositors.
- Deposit insurance covers all deposits **such as savings, fixed, current, recurring deposits**, etc. in all commercial banks, functioning in India.
- Deposits in State, Central and Primary cooperative banks, functioning in States/Union Territories are also covered.
- In a path breaking reform, Bank deposit insurance cover was **enhanced from Rs. 1 lakh to Rs. 5 lakhs**.
- With deposit insurance coverage of **Rs. 5 lakh per depositor per bank**, the number of fully protected accounts at end of previous financial year constituted **98.1% of the total number of accounts**, as against the international benchmark of 80%.
- The first tranche of interim payments has been released by **the Deposit Insurance and Credit Guarantee Corporation** recently, against claims received from depositors of 16 Urban Cooperative Banks which are under restrictions by RBI.
- **Payout of over Rs 1300 crore** has been made to alternate bank accounts of over 1 lakh depositors against their claims.

#### **Centre to organize the first of its kind innovation week to encourage Startup ecosystem in India:**

- As a part of Azadi ka Amrit Mahotsav, a week-long event, "**Celebrating Innovation Ecosystem**", to be hosted by **Department for Promotion of Industry and Internal Trade (DPIIT)**, is proposed to be held in January 2022.
- Secretary, DPIIT Shri Anurag Jain reviewed the project in a high-level meeting. The event will mark the **6th anniversary of the launch of the Startup India initiative**.
- The key objectives of the **Innovation Week** will be to bring together the country's key **Startups, entrepreneurs, investors, policy makers and other national/ international stakeholders** for a specially curated event on innovation and entrepreneurship and to exchange knowledge on best practices on nurturing Startup ecosystems.
- The initiative aspires to encourage and inspire **the youth for innovation and entrepreneurship** and develop capacities of entrepreneurial ecosystem.
- Innovation week would help provide market access opportunities to Startups and aid and abet the mobilization of global and domestic capital for investments into Startups.
- The event is also set to showcase **high-quality, high technology and frugal innovations from India**.
- Apart from deliberating on good practices from best of the ecosystems across the world, the sessions will be designed to showcase the spread and depth of entrepreneurship based on innovation in India

### 14566 - National Helpline Against Atrocities on SCs/STs Launched:

- **The Ministry of Social Justice and Empowerment** has initiated a National Helpline Against Atrocities (NHAA).
- The Helpline is available round the clock on **toll-free number "14566"** across the country in Hindi, English and regional language of the State/UTs.
- **Way to Access**

The Helpline can be accessed by making a voice call /VOIP either from a mobile or land line number of any Telecom Operator across the country. It is also available as a web-based self-service portal.

- **Main Aim**

Meant for generating informed awareness about the various provisions of **the Prevention of Atrocities (PoA) Act, 1989 and the Protection of Civil Right (PCR) Act, 1955** that are aimed at ending discrimination and provide protection to all, the Helpline ensures that every complaint is registered as FIRs, relief is provided, all registered complaints are investigated and all chargesheets filed are prosecuted in the Courts for decision - all within the given timelines in the Act.

- **Grievances Redressal & Tracking System**

A Docket number is given for each complaint received from Victim/Complainant/NGOs regarding non-compliance of the POA Act, 1989 and the PCR Act, 1955. The status of the grievance can be tracked by complainant/NGOs online.

### PM inaugurates Shri Kashi Vishwanath Dham in Varanasi:

- Prime Minister **Shri Narendra Modi** inaugurated **Shri Kashi Vishwanath Dham in Varanasi**. He prayed at the Kaal Bhairav Temple and Kashi Vishvanath Dham in Kashi.
- The Prime Minister cited Puranas which say that as soon as one enters Kashi, one becomes free from all bondage. "Blessings of Lord Vishweshwara, a supernatural energy awakens our inner soul as soon as we come here". This whole new complex of Vishwanath Dham is not just a grand building.
- **This is a symbol of the Sanatan culture of our India**. It is a symbol of our spiritual soul. This is a symbol of India's antiquity, traditions, India's energy and dynamism.
- The Prime Minister said 'when one comes here, they will see not only faith but will also feel the glory of the past here. How the inspirations of the ancient are giving direction to the future, witnessing this very vividly in Vishwanath Dham complex

### Swachh Bharat Mission (Urban) 2.0 and AMRUT 2.0 to make the city's garbage free and water secure during the mission period of five years (2021-2026):

- The major focus of **Swachh Bharat Mission (Urban) 2.0 [SBM (U) 2.0]** and **AMRUT 2.0** launched on 1st October, 2021 is to make the city's garbage free and water secure during the mission period of **five years (2021-2026)**.
- **The highlights of SBM (U) 2.0 are as under:**
  - all households and premises segregate their waste into "wet waste" (from kitchen and gardens) and "dry waste" (including paper, glass, plastic, and domestic hazardous waste and sanitary waste wrapped separately);
  - 100% door to door collection of segregated waste from each household/ premise;
  - 100% scientific management of all fractions of waste, including safe disposal in scientific landfills;
  - all legacy dumpsites remediated;
  - all used water including faecal sludge, is safely contained, transported, processed and disposed so that no untreated faecal sludge and used water pollutes the ground or water bodies, in cities with less than one lakh population;

phased reduction in use of single use plastic.

**The highlights of AMRUT 2.0 are as under:**

- Universal coverage of water supply from 500 cities to about 4,800 statutory towns.
- Focus on making the cities 'self-reliant' and 'water secure'.
- Universal coverage of sewerage and septage management in 500 AMRUT cities.\
- Target to provide 2.68 crore drinking water tap connections and 2.64 crore sewer connections.
- Focus on financial sustainability of Urban Local Bodies (ULBs) through enhanced credit worthiness and market borrowing.
- 'Pey Jal Survekshan' will be undertaken in cities to promote healthy competition among them and function as monitoring tool and Mission accelerator.
- Technology sub-Mission under AMRUT 2.0 will help in identifying proven and potential global technologies in water sector.
- Entrepreneurship/ start-ups involved in low-cost indigenous equipments and processes will be encouraged.
- All the cities of Uttar Pradesh including Firozabad are covered under SBM (U) 2.0 and are eligible to avail all components as per operational guidelines.

**Venkaiah Naidu to inaugurate exhibition on Ek Bharat Shrestha Bharat in Hyderabad:**

- Vice President M. Venkaiah Naidu will inaugurate an exhibition on Ek Bharat Shreshtha Bharat in Hyderabad city.
- Exhibition will be organised by the Regional Outreach Bureau, Ministry of Information and Broadcasting.
- This exhibition will highlight the various interesting aspects of the paired states of Haryana and Telangana like art forms, cuisine, festivals, monuments and tourism spots.
- It will be open for viewing from 12th to 14th December at Potti Sreeramulu Telugu University Campus, Nampally, Hyderabad.
- The Ek Bharat Shreshtha Bharat programme is a unique initiative by the Government to promote the spirit of national integration and to strengthen the fabric of emotional bonds between the people of our country.
- The programme was launched by Prime Minister Narendra Modi in October, 2015 on the occasion of the 140th birth anniversary of Sardar Vallabhbhai Patel, who played a significant role in the unification of the country post-independence.

#### NEDFI Announces Atmanirbhar Hastshilpkar Scheme

- North Eastern Development Finance Corporation Ltd. (NEDFi) has launched the Atma Nirbhar Hastshilpkar scheme which will provide financial assistance to the grass root Artisans of the region.
- **Objective:**
- To develop the petty artisans of the North Eastern Region by providing financial assistance in the form of term loan for income generating activities for setting up / expansion / modernization / working capital requirement and other activities related to the sector.
- During the launching ceremony, a total of 17 artisans have been provided with credit assistance of INR 1 lakh per artisan.
- The credit facility is collateral free and carries a subsidized interest rate of 6% p.a., which is repayable in 24 months.
- For regular repayment, an incentive of 1% on the interest rate is provided, which will be refunded to the artisans on successful repayment of loans.
- The interested artisans can apply for the scheme at NEDFi registered office Guwahati and any of its branch offices with the following eligibility criteria:
  - a) Registered/ unregistered artisan/ Individual
  - b) Having valid qualification or practicing any art form
  - c) No existing loan from any other bank/ financial institution
  - d) Bank Account
  - e) Aadhaar Card (optional)

## PM Modi to address function on Depositors First-Guaranteed Time-bound Deposit Insurance Payment up to Rs 5 Lakh:

- Prime Minister Narendra Modi will address the function on **Depositors First-Guaranteed Time-bound Deposit Insurance Payment up to 5 Lakh rupees** in Vigyan Bhawan.
- Union Finance Minister, Minister of State for Finance and RBI Governor will also be present during the occasion.
- **Deposit insurance** covers all deposits such as **savings, fixed, current, recurring deposits** in all commercial banks functioning in India.
- Deposits in State, Central and Primary cooperative banks, functioning in States and Union Territories are also covered.
- In a path-breaking reform, Bank deposit insurance cover was enhanced **from one lakh to 5 lakh rupees**.
- The number of fully protected accounts at end of previous **financial year constituted 98.1 percent** of the total number of accounts, as against the international **benchmark of 80 percent**.
- The first tranche of **interim payments has been released by the Deposit Insurance and Credit Guarantee Corporation recently**, against claims received from depositors of **16 Urban Cooperative Banks** which are under restrictions by RBI.
- Payout of over 1300 crore rupees has been made to alternate bank accounts of over 1 lakh depositors against their claims.

## Ministry of Defence signs MoU with IITE, Gandhinagar for training of 800 Sainik School teachers:

- **Ministry of Defence (MoD)** has entered into a Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) with **Indian Institute of Teacher Education (IITE) Gandhinagar** to facilitate training to teachers of Sainik Schools.
- The MoU was signed in New Delhi on December 10, 2021 by Joint Secretary (Land & Works) and Honorary Secretary, Sainik Schools Society (SSS), **Rakesh Mittal on behalf of MoD and Registrar of IITE Dr Himanshu Patel** in the presence Defence Secretary Dr Ajay Kumar and IITE Vice Chancellor Dr Harshad A Patel.
- Terming the MoU as a significant step towards capacity building of teachers of Sainik Schools in terms of **imparting quality education to students with Indian ethos**, the Defence Secretary, it would help to enhance the brand of not only existing Sainik Schools but also 100 upcoming Schools.
- The MoU is for the period **of five years commencing with effect from January 2022** under which 800 plus teachers of all Sainik Schools will be trained through courses **named 'Gurudiksha' & 'Pratibaddhta'**.

- The main objective of this MoU is to nurture the teachers of tomorrow with the transformative knowledge of Indian traditions and usher in a new era of teacher education focusing upon the integral development of teachers

#### ABU Robocon 2022 comes to New Delhi – Doordarshan to host International Finals:

- **Doordarshan** will be hosting the international finals of **Robocon 2022 in August next year**.
- The Robot competition, which is organised by Asia-Pacific Broadcasting Union and hosted by different member countries every year, **will be held in New Delhi in 2022**.
- **ABU Robocon 2021 was hosted by China** wherein the international Robocon contest was held on December 12, 2021.
- Teams from **Nirma University and Gujarat Technological University (GTU), Ahmedabad**, who were the India finalists, participated in the international contest from India.
- **Prasar Bharati Board Member Shaina NC** graced the occasion and addressed the participating engineering students of Nirma University and Gujarat Technological University in Ahmedabad.
- To all engineering students, especially the girls, to participate in **next year's Robocon** to be hosted by **Doordarshan**.

#### Chairperson, Lokpal of India, Justice Pinaki Chandra Ghose inaugurates Digital Platform for Management of complaints- 'LokpalOnline':

- Chairperson, Lokpal of India, **Justice Pinaki Chandra Ghose today inaugurated** a digital Platform for Management of Complaints called '**LokpalOnline**' here that can be accessed by all citizens of the country and complaints can be filed from anywhere, anytime at <http://lokpalonline.gov.in>
- Justice Pinaki Chandra Ghose, corruption is a key element in underperformance of the economy and it undermines democracy and rule of law.
- Justice Ghose said that the LokpalOnline is a web-based facility, which will quicken the disposal of complaints in an accountable, transparent and efficient manner with benefits to all stakeholders.
- It facilitates handling of complaints during the complete **lifecycle of the Complaint, right from its filing to the final disposal** and this will bring more transparency and efficiency in the complaint handling mechanism.

#### NITI Aayog and Bharti Foundation announce the launch of 'Convoke 2021-22':

- **NITI Aayog in partnership with Bharti Foundation**, the philanthropic arm of Bharti Enterprises, launched **Convoke 2021-22**.
- Convoke is a National research Symposium which aims at addressing challenges in imparting education and strengthening its quality with special focus on all teachers, educationists, heads of schools across India.



- Through this platform, School Teachers/ Heads/Principals of Government Schools and teachers from Bharti Foundation network will be encouraged to use research-based solutions through scientific approach, and showcase their efforts taken at the grass-root level in improving learning outcomes.
- **The National Education Policy (NEP) 2020 also recognises** and identifies teachers and faculty as the heart of the learning process.
- It recommends that teachers will be recognised for novel approaches to teaching that **improve learning outcomes in their classrooms.**
- NEP recommends to develop platforms so that teachers may share ideas and best practices for wider dissemination and replication.
- Teachers over the years have been coming up with innovative solution to help support students and even more during lockdown. **Through Convoke they can now share their micro research papers.**
- These research papers will be analyzed by a panel of Educationists. The shortlisted Research Papers will be presented during '**National Research Symposium**' scheduled in January,2022.

#### India's first and one of world's largest Green Hydrogen Microgrid Projects to be set up at Simhadri:

- NTPC has awarded a project of "**Standalone Fuel-Cell based Micro-grid with hydrogen production using electrolyser in NTPC Guest House at Simhadri** (near Visakhapatnam)".
- It is India's first **Green Hydrogen based Energy Storage Project.**
- It would be a precursor to large scale hydrogen energy storage projects and would be useful for studying and deploying multiple microgrids in various off grid and strategic locations of the country.
- The hydrogen would be produced using the advanced **240 kW Solid Oxide Electrolyser** by taking input power from the **nearby Floating Solar project.**
- The hydrogen produced during sunshine hours would be stored at high pressure and would be electrified using a **50 kW Solid Oxide Fuel Cell.**
- This unique project configuration is designed in-house by NTPC. It is a unique project for India and would open doors for decarbonising the far-off regions of the country like Ladakh, J&K etc., hitherto dependent on diesel generators.
- The project is in-line with the vision of Hon'ble Prime Minister for becoming carbon neutral by 2070 and making Ladakh a carbon neutral territory.

#### IBBI organises a Workshop on "Committee of Creditors: An Institution of Public Faith":

- As part of the ongoing '**Azadi Ka Amrit Mahotsav**' celebrations, the Insolvency and Bankruptcy Board of India (IBBI), in association **with the State Bank of India (SBI) and the Indian Banks' Association (IBA),**

organised a one-day workshop, in hybrid mode, on the subject titled **“Committee of Creditors: An Institution of Public Faith”**.

- **This is the eighth such workshop** in the series of events organized by the IBBI for the benefit of officers of scheduled commercial banks and financial institutions who represent financial creditors in the Committee of Creditors (CoC), **under the Insolvency and Bankruptcy Code, 2016 (Code)**.
- **Seventy-Three senior officers** (Assistant General Manager and above) representing seventeen scheduled commercial banks and financial institutions participated in the workshop.
- The workshop aimed at developing a better understanding of the role of and expectations from the CoC and to build the capacity of financial creditors to ensure that the CoC:
  - Discharges its statutory duty and responsibility with utmost care and diligence;
  - Develop capability and motivation to prudently apply its commercial wisdom; and
  - Consider and balance the interest of all the stakeholders in a resolution process.

#### **Health Minister Mansukh Mandaviya chairs India Global Forum Healthcare Roundtable in Dubai:**

- Health Minister **Mansukh Mandaviya** has chaired India Global Forum Healthcare Roundtable in Dubai. Mr Mandaviya, he discussed various issues related to healthcare.
- India has a major role to play in **mitigating global health risks**.
- India is committed to ensuring affordable healthcare to all through collaboration and adopting tech-based solutions.

#### **Trafficking in Persons (Prevention, Care & Rehabilitation) Draft Bill 2021:**

- Ministry of Women and Child Development has invited all the stakeholders on the draft ‘**Trafficking in Persons (Prevention, Care and Rehabilitation) Bill, 2021**’.
- The objective of the bill is to **prevent and counter trafficking in persons**, especially women and children, to provide for care, protection, and rehabilitation to the victims, while respecting their rights, and creating a supportive legal, economic and social environment for them and also **to ensure prosecution of offenders, and for matters connected therewith or incidental thereto**.
- The Bill, once finalized, will be sent to the Cabinet for approval and then **for the assent of both the houses of Parliament to become an Act**.
- This Act shall apply to every offence of trafficking in persons with cross-border implications.

#### **CABINET APPROVALS:**

##### **(A) Treaty between India and Poland concerning Mutual Legal Assistance in Criminal Matters:**

- The Union Cabinet chaired by the Prime Minister Shri Narendra Modi has approved the Treaty on Mutual Legal Assistance in Criminal Matters between the Government of the Republic of India and the Republic of

**Poland** with a view to enhance capability and effectiveness of both countries in investigation and prosecution of crimes, including crimes related to terrorism through mutual legal assistance.

- **Benefits:**

- The Treaty aims to enhance effectiveness of both the countries in investigation and prosecution of crime, through cooperation and mutual legal assistance in criminal matters.
- In the context of transnational crime and its linkages to terrorism, **the proposed Treaty will provide a broad legal framework for bilateral cooperation with Poland** in investigation and prosecution of crime as well as in tracing, restraint and confiscation of proceeds and instruments of crime as well as the funds meant to finance terrorist acts.
- After signing and ratification of the Treaty, **suitable Gazette Notifications will be issued under the relevant provisions of Cr.P.C. 1973** to give effect to the provisions of the Treaty in India.
- The Gazette notification is accessible to general public outside the Government domain and it will provide increased awareness and transparency on mutual cooperation between India and Poland in the field of mutual legal assistance in criminal matters.
- It will increase effectiveness of India in tackling **criminal activities involving Poland**.
- Once in operation, the Treaty will be instrumental in gaining better inputs and insights in the modus operandi of organized criminals and terrorists.
- These in turn can be used to fine tune policy decisions in the field of internal security.

**(B) An incentive scheme for promotion of RuPay Debit Cards and low-value BHIM-UPI transactions (P2M):**

- The Union Cabinet, chaired by the Prime Minister Shri Narendra Modi, has approved an incentive scheme to promote **RuPay Debit cards and low-value [up to Rs. 2,000] BHIM-UPI transactions (Person-to-Merchant (P2M)) in the country.**
- Under the scheme, the acquiring banks will be incentivized by the Government, by way of paying percentage of value of transactions (P2M) done through RuPay Debit cards and low-value BHIM-UPI modes of payments, at an estimated financial outlay of **Rs.1,300 crore for a period of one-year w.e.f. April 01, 2021.**
- This scheme will facilitate acquiring Banks in building robust digital payment ecosystem and promoting **RuPay Debit card and BHIM-UPI digital transactions**, across all sectors and segments of the population and further deepening of digital payments in the country.
- It will also help in making accessible digital modes of payments to unbanked and marginalized populations, who are outside of the formal banking and financial system.

- India today is one of the most efficient payments markets in the world. These developments have been the outcome of the initiatives of **the initiatives of the Government of India and innovation by various players in the digital payment ecosystem.**
- The scheme will further spur research and development and innovation in fintech space, and will help the Government in further deepening of digital payments in various part of countries.

**(C) Programme for Development of Semiconductors and Display Manufacturing Ecosystem in India:**

- In furtherance of the vision of AatmaNirbhar Bharat and positioning India as the global hub for Electronic System Design and Manufacturing, **the Union Cabinet chaired by Hon'ble Prime Minister Shri Narendra Modi has approved the comprehensive program for the development of sustainable semiconductor and display ecosystem in the country.**
- The program will usher in a new era in electronics manufacturing by providing a globally competitive incentive package to companies in semiconductors and display manufacturing as well as design.
- This shall pave the way for **India's technological leadership in these areas of strategic importance and economic self-reliance.**
- Semiconductors and displays are the foundation of modern electronics driving the next phase of digital transformation **under Industry 4.0.**
- Semiconductors and display manufacturing is very complex and technology-intensive sector involving huge capital investments, high risk, long gestation and payback periods, and rapid changes in technology, which require significant and sustained investments.
- The program will give an impetus to semiconductor and display manufacturing by facilitating capital support and technological collaborations.
- The programme aims to provide attractive incentive support to companies / consortia that are engaged in Silicon Semiconductor Fabs, Display Fabs, Compound Semiconductors / Silicon Photonics / Sensors (including MEMS) Fabs, Semiconductor Packaging (ATMP / OSAT), Semiconductor Design.

**(D) Implementation of Pradhan Mantri Krishi Sinchayee Yojana for 2021-26**

- The Cabinet Committee on Economic Affairs chaired by the Prime Minister Shri Narendra Modi, has approved implementation of **Pradhan Mantri Krishi Sinchayee Yojana (PMKSY) for 2021-26 with an outlay of Rs.93,068 crore.**
- The CCEA has approved **central support of Rs.37,454 crore to States and Rs.20,434.56 crore** of debt servicing for loan availed by Government of India for irrigation development during PMKSY 2016-21.
- Accelerated **Irrigation Benefit Programme (AIBP), Har Khet ko Paani (HKKP)** and Watershed Development components have been approved for continuation during 2021-26.

- Accelerated Irrigation Benefit Programme - a flagship programme of Government of India aims for financial support to irrigation projects.
- Total additional irrigation potential creation targeted during 2021-26 under AIBP is 13.88 lakh hectare. Apart from focused completion of 60 ongoing projects including their 30.23 lakh hectare command area development, additional projects can also be taken up.
- The inclusion criteria have been relaxed for projects under tribal and drought prone areas.

**(E) A programme for the Development of Semiconductors and Display Manufacturing Ecosystem in the country:**

- The Cabinet has approved a programme for Development of Semiconductors and Display Manufacturing Ecosystem in the country.
- Briefing reporters after the Cabinet meeting in New Delhi yesterday, Information and Broadcasting Minister Anurag Thakur, **76,000 crore rupees will be spent on this project in the next six years.**
- This will strengthen India's journey towards **Aatma Nirbhar Bharat.**
- Electronics and IT Minister **Ashwini Vaishnaw**, in the **last seven years**, the country has reached **75 billion US dollars** in the electronic manufacturing sector.

**Virendra Kumar inaugurates 'Samajik Adhikarita Shivr' for distribution of aids and assistive devices to 'Divyangjan' and Senior Citizens**

- Union Minister for Social Justice and Empowerment, Dr. Virendra Kumar has virtually inaugurated 'Samajik Adhikarita Shivr' for distribution of aids and assistive devices to 'Divyangjan' under the ADIP Scheme and to Senior Citizens under the 'Rashtriya Vayoshri Yojana' of the Ministry of Social Justice and Empowerment, Government of India in District **Bhadohi**.
- The Camp was organized by the Department of Empowerment of Persons with Disabilities (DEPwD) in association with **Artificial Limbs Manufacturing Corporation of India (ALIMCO)**, a **Miniratna-II PSU** under Ministry of Social Justice and Empowerment, Government of India and District Administration, Bhadohi (U.P) at Vibhuti Narayan, Government Inter Collage, Gyanpur in **Bhadohi District, Uttar Pradesh.**
- Total **2818 number of Divyangjan and Senior Citizens beneficiaries** have been identified under ADIP Scheme and Rashtriya Vayoshri Yojana (RVY) of Government of India during the assessment camps organized by ALIMCO at different location from 8th November to 13th November 2021.
- The camps is conducted under the Scheme of **Assistance to Disabled Persons (ADIP) for Purchase/Fitting of Aid/Appliances (ADIP)** is one of the most popular scheme for providing assistive aids & appliance to Divyangjans and Rashtriya Vayoshri Yojana for providing daily living assistive devices for senior citizens and is organized by Artificial Limbs Manufacturing Corporation of India (ALIMCO), a Public Sector

Undertaking under the Ministry of Social Justice and Empowerment has been identified as the implementing agency of the ADIP scheme in association with states/districts authorities.

#### PM to lay foundation stone of Ganga Expressway in Shahjahanpur

- Prime Minister Shri **Narendra Modi** will lay the foundation stone of **Ganga Expressway in Shahjahanpur, Uttar Pradesh** on 18 December 2021.
- The inspiration behind the Expressway is the vision of the Prime Minister to provide fast paced connectivity across the country.
- The **594 Km long six-lane Expressway** will be built at a cost of over **Rs 36,200 crore**. Starting near the Bijauli village in Meerut, the Expressway will extend till near the Judapur Dandu village in Prayagraj.
- It will pass through **Meerut, Hapur, Bulandshahr, Amroha, Sambhal, Budaun, Shahjahanpur, Hardoi, Unnao, RaeBareilly, Pratapgarh and Prayagraj**.
- Upon completion of work, it will become the longest expressway of Uttar Pradesh, connecting the western and eastern regions of the state.
- A **3.5 Km long air strip** for assisting emergency take-off and landing of Air Force planes will also be constructed on the Expressway in Shahjahanpur.
- An industrial corridor is also proposed to be built along the Expressway.
- The Expressway will also give a fillip to multiple sectors including industrial development, trade, agriculture, tourism etc. It will provide a big boost to the socio-economic development of the region.

#### PM addresses farmers at National Conclave on Natural Farming

- Prime Minister Shri **Narendra Modi** addressed farmers at the **National Conclave on Natural Farming through a video conference**.
- Union Ministers Shri Amit Shah, Shri Narendra Singh Tomer, Governor of Gujarat, Chief Ministers of Gujarat, and Uttar Pradesh were among those present on the occasion.
- Addressing the farmers, the Prime Minister called for the adaptation of **agriculture according to new requirements, new challenges of the journey till the 100th year of independence**.
- The Prime Minister noted that in the last 6-7 years, several steps have been taken, from seed to market to increase the income of the farmers.
- Measures from soil testing to hundreds of new seeds, from **PM Kisan Samman Nidhi to fixing MSP at 1.5 times the cost of production**, from irrigation to a strong network of Kisan Rail have taken the sector in that direction.
- The Government of **Gujarat** organized the National Conclave on Natural Farming. The **three-day Summit** was organized from 14th to 16th December 2021.



- It was attended by over 5000 farmers, apart from farmers connected Live through Central Institutes of ICAR, **Krishi Vigyan Kendra's** and ATMA (Agricultural Technology Management Agency) network in the States.

#### MeitY organises 25th CISO Deep Dive Training program under Cyber Surakshit Bharat initiative

- With an aim to strengthen the cyber security ecosystem in Government organizations in the country, **the National e-Governance Division under the Ministry of Electronics, and Information Technology (MeitY)** is conducting a six-day deep dive training program for **Chief Information Security Officers (CISOs)** and frontline IT officials from various Ministries & Departments, Government & Semi-Government organisations from Central and State Governments, PSUs, banks, among others.
- The training program is a part of a series of workshops **organised by the National e-Governance Division at MeitY under the Cyber Surakshit Bharat initiative.**
- It will help the CISOs and other participants to equip themselves with better understanding of the emerging cyber threat landscape, **understand best practices in cyber security so that they are able to translate the benefits of a secure cyber space to individual organisations and citizens at large.**
- The program is being conducted from December 13 - 18, 2021 and will cover topics such as Governance Risk & Compliance and Data Privacy, Network Security, End Point Security, Application & Data Security, Cloud Security, Mobile Security, Cryptography, Cyber Security related provisions in IT Act, Security audit, guidelines for preparing CCMP and operation and monitoring of Security Operation Centre (SoC) etc.

#### Venkaiah Naidu inaugurates the National Parliamentary Conference on Tuberculosis among Women

- Vice President Shri M. Venkaiah Naidu inaugurated the **National Parliamentary Conference on Tuberculosis among Women** in the presence of Dr. Mansukh Mandaviya, Union Minister for Health and Family Welfare, Smt. **Smriti Z. Irani, Union Minister for Women and Child Development, Dr. Bharati Pravin Pawar, Minister of State for Health and Family Welfare and Shri Munjapara Mahendrabhai, Minister of State for Women and Child Development.**
- The Conference underlined that undernutrition along with its engendered pattern is an important and established risk factor for the progression of latent TB infection to active TB.
- Therefore, the battling of TB stigma, ensuring that women actively seek and complete TB care along with adequate nutritional support, and ensuring that there is whole-of-society participation in **achieving the goal to eliminate TB by 2025 were highlighted.**
- **India is committed to end TB by 2025, five years ahead of the global Sustainable Development Goals target of 2030.**

- Recognizing the need for accelerated and sustained focus to achieve the target of a TB Free India, the Ministry of Health & Family Welfare had launched the 'TB Mukht Bharat Abhiyaan' aimed at mass awareness generation and successive behaviour change of the community.

### Three bills to be introduced in Lok Sabha

- The National Anti-Doping Bill, 2021, The Wild Life (Protection) Amendment Bill, 2021 and The Chartered Accountants, the Cost and Works Accountants and the Company Secretaries (Amendment) Bill, 2021 are scheduled to be introduced in the Lok Sabha.
- There will be further discussion and voting on the Supplementary Demands for Grants Second Batch for 2021-22 in the Lok Sabha.
- In the Rajya Sabha, The Mediation Bill, 2021 is scheduled to be introduced.

### Giriraj Singh launches MIS portal for rankings of States,UTs in Land Acquisition Projects

- Rural Development Minister Giriraj Singh launched the Management Information System (MIS) portal for rankings of States and Union Territories in Land Acquisition Projects.
- As per the ranking and performance, the top three States and top three districts will be awarded.
- The MIS portal will not only show the data and figures, but it will also show the speed of the development in the country.
- This portal is a result of the vision of Prime Minister Narendra Modi to give impetus to the government's Gati Shakti Mission.
- Expressing concern over the delayed implementation of the projects in the country, the Minister, delay in completion of projects increases the project cost and hampers the speed of development.

### MEA to organize second Atal Bihari Vajpayee Lecture

- The Ministry of External Affairs will be organizing the second Atal Bihari Vajpayee Lecture on 24 December 2021.
- The lecture will be delivered by Dr Michael Fullilove, Executive Director of the Lowy Institute of Australia.
- It will be on "Australia, India and the Indo-Pacific: The need for strategic imagination".
- This is the second edition of this lecture series, which was instituted in memory of former Prime Minister and External Affairs Minister Late Shri Atal Bihari Vajpayee.

### Ashok Leyland in pact with DRDO arm to develop combat vehicle engines

- India's Ashok Leyland and the combat vehicles research and development establishment (CVRDE) have partnered to develop and manufacture the 600hp indigenous engine for combat vehicles.
- It also marks a key milestone in India's successful week under Azadi Ka Amrut Mahotsav.
- The event was held at Ashok Leyland's engine development center in Chennai, India.

- **Defense requirements :**
- Pravin Kumar Mehta, Distinguished Scientist and Director General, Armament & Combat Engineering Systems (ACE), inaugurated on Wednesday the testing of the engine at the Engine Development Center of Ashok Leyland located near Chennai.
- The 600-HP engine will undergo rigorous testing in the lab and will be qualified for application in tanks.
- Ashok Leyland will undertake series production of the engine post induction into service.

#### Union cabinet gives nod to raise legal marriage age of women From 18 To 21 Years

- The **union cabinet** approved the **proposal to raise the minimum age of marriage for women from 18 to 21 years old.**
- The proposed reform will equalize legal marriageable ages for both genders.
- The move aimed at **empowering women** and not controlling the population.
- The government will introduce an amendment to the **Prohibition of Child Marriage Act, 2006**, and consequently bring amendments to the Special Marriage Act and personal laws such as the Hindu Marriage Act, 1955.
- The proposal was recommended by the task force **headed by Jaya Jaitley** in Niti Aayog.
- Section 5(iii) of the Hindu Marriage Act, 1955 sets 18 years as the minimum age for the bride and 21 for the groom. The Special Marriage Act, 1954 and the Prohibition of Child Marriage Act, 2006 also prescribe 18 and 21 years as the minimum age of consent for marriage for women and men, respectively.
- The task force made the recommendations after extensive consultations with experts, young adults, especially young women.
- The data released by NFHS 5 (National Family Health Survey) has already shown that the Total Fertility Rate is decreasing and the population is under control.
- The proposal was recommended by a task force set by the government to examine women-related matters pertaining to the age of motherhood, imperatives of lowering MMR (Maternal Mortality Rate), improvement of nutritional levels, among others.

#### India and the US announce new programme supporting innovations to tackle climate & clean energy challenges

- A programme to support **India-US S&T-based entrepreneurial initiatives** that address the development and implementation of **next-generation clean and renewable energy, energy storage, and carbon sequestration** has been **announced to tackle climate and clean energy challenges.**
- The programme titled 'Technology-based Energy Solutions: Innovations for Net Zero' constitutes a call for Ignition Grants by the **United States-India Science & Technology Endowment Fund (USISTEF)**, in partnership with Social Alpha, a non-profit organization promoting S&T entrepreneurship.

- It will identify and support 'technology showstoppers or promising joint India-US S&T-based entrepreneurial initiatives in this area.
- The launch of **the U.S.-India Climate and Clean Energy Agenda 2030 partnership in April 2021** reiterated the commitment of both nations to work together to achieve their ambitious climate and clean energy targets and to strengthen bilateral collaborations.
- The new program aligns with the goals of the U.S.-India strategic Clean Energy Partnership and will be administered by the **bi-national Indo-U.S. Science and Technology Forum (IUSSTF)**.
- The IUSSTF is a bilateral organization under the Department of Science and Technology (DST), Government of India, and U.S. Department of State.

#### **Ministry of Rural Development to launch Overdraft facility for women SHG members under DAY-NRLM**

- As a part of the **Azadi ka Amrit Mahotsav**, **Shri Nagendra Nath Sinha**, Secretary, Department of Rural Development, Ministry of Rural Development will launch the **overdraft facility of Rs. 5,000** to verified **women SHG members under DAY-NRLM**, on 18th December 2021.
- The event will also include a **"Discourse on Rural Financial Inclusion"** in which top officials from Banks and State missions will participate.
- The annual awards for performance of Banks under DAY-NRLM, during the year 2020-21 will also be announced.
- All Public Sector Banks and State Rural Livelihoods Missions will participate in the launching programme which will be held through virtual mode.
- **Deendayal Antyodaya Yojana - National Rural Livelihoods Mission (DAY-NRLM)**, a flagship programme of Ministry of Rural Development aims at eliminating rural poverty through mobilizing poor women into community institutions like **Self Help Groups (SHGs)** and strengthening their livelihood base by accessing necessary credit from banks.
- **The Mission was launched in June 2011** and as on 15th December, 2021, 8.04 crore rural women have been mobilized into **73.5 Lakh Self Help Groups** and it is envisaged that by 2024, about 10 crore women would be mobilized into Self Help Groups.
- The outstanding balance is of more than Rs. 1,33,915 crores with **just 2.49% NPA**.
- During this Financial Year upto 30th November, 2021, 27.38 lakhs SHGs have been provided credit by banks to the extent of **Rs 62,848 Crores** and total credit accessed by the women SHGs is more than **Rs.4.45 lakh** crores since April, 2013, inter alia to make adequate investment in productive enterprises.

#### **DPIIT has launched the Unified Logistics Interface Platform's (ULIP) Hackathon**

- The **Department for Promotion of Industry and Internal Trade (DPIIT)** has launched the **Unified Logistics Interface Platform's (ULIP) Hackathon – 'LogiXtics'** in order to crowdsource more ideas which will benefit the logistics industry.
- ULIP is designed to enhance efficiency and reduce logistics cost in India by creating a transparent platform that can provide real time information to all stakeholders and remove all asymmetry information.
- The **ULIP Hackathon – LogiXtics** is organised by **NITI Aayog and Atal Innovation Mission** and supported by **National Industrial Corridor Development Corporation (NICDC)** and **NICDC Logistics Data Bank Services Limited (NLDSL)**.
- The ULIP Hackathon was launched by **Shri Amitabh Kant, CEO, NITI Aayog** in the presence of **Shri Amrit Lal Meena** Special Secretary, Department of Logistics, Ministry of Commerce & Industry and **CEO & MD, NICDC**; **Ms. Anna Roy**, Senior Advisor, NITI Aayog and **Shri Abhishek Chaudhary**, Vice President, NICDC.
- ULIP is being developed as technology platform in the logistics sector which will provide real time information to all stakeholders and will converge visibility of multi-modal transport across the existing systems of various Ministries/Departments working in silos.
- Once completed, one can see huge efficiencies in the logistics sector, and which will transform it by bringing down the logistics cost and enhancing India's competitiveness in the global trade.

#### **PM Narendra Modi launches development projects worth 650 crore rupees on Goa Liberation Day**

- Prime **Minister Narendra Modi** has participated in the **Goa Liberation Day celebrations** at **Shyamaprasad Mukherjee Stadium** in **Taligao**.
- He felicitated freedom fighters and veterans of **'Operation Vijay'** at the function.
- During his address on this occasion, the Prime Minister informed **Goa is top in good governance, per capita income, and several other fronts**
- The Prime Minister also inaugurated and laid the **foundation stone of several development projects worth over 650 crore rupees in the state**.
- The Prime Minister, during its struggle for liberation, people of Goa kept the flame for Independence burning for the longest time and Goa government for completing **100 percent coverage of 1st dose to all its eligible population**.
- The Prime Minister urged the people of the state to set new goals to achieve greater heights. Remembering the dynamic leadership qualities of former Chief Minister **Manohar Parrikar**.

#### **Raksha Mantri inaugurates Centre of Excellence in Land Survey in National Institute of Defence Estates Management**

- As a part of the Capacity Building initiative of the Government of India, **National Institute of Defence Estates Management** one of the premier Central Training Institutes has established a Centre of Excellence in Land Survey.
- This centre was inaugurated on 16th December 2021 by **the Raksha Mantri Shri Rajnath Singh**.
- **Defence Estates Organisation** constantly undertakes land surveys as a part of their domain specialization and thereby developed expertise in this area of activity.
- The Centre of Excellence will cater to the training needs of Government officers and technical personnel who are involved in surveys exclusively in emerging survey technologies like Drone surveys and Satellite imagery-based surveys.
- Nowadays real-time monitoring systems based on digital photogrammetric techniques, high-resolution satellite imagery, airborne and terrestrial laser scanner devices can give a set of powerful tools for geometric surveying and modelling.
- The Centre of Excellence is focused on such new techniques of the survey.
- The expertise developed in this regard will be shared with other **Central and State Government Departments** including autonomous bodies who are willing to sponsor participants to the basis and specialized courses to be conducted at the Centre of Excellence.

#### GIS Based Automatic Water Supply System for citizens of Cantonment Board under eChhawani project

- The GIS Based 'Automatic Water Supply System' for citizens of Cantonment Boards has been launched recently by Raksha Mantri Shri. **Rajnath Singh** on the occasion of **Defence Estates Day 2021**.
- The module of GIS based Water Supply system for Cantonment Boards has been **developed by Bhaskaracharya Institute for Space Applications and Geo informatics (BISAG)** under the guidance of Defence Secretary and Director General of Defence Estates, **Delhi**.
- The module further facilitates sanction for water connection online. Once the system issues sanction, the concerned Department in Cantt Board will ensure actual water connection within given time-lines.
- The system is highly user friendly, efficient and transparent.
- This GIS System is first of its kind in the country. It is based on "**minimum government and supports the concept of "maximum governance"**" as there is no manual intervention for clearance/sanction of the water connection.
- In conventional Water Supply System, citizens apply to the local bodies and the application is processed which takes time.
- The charges are required to be deposited offline and **no time period** is defined for grant of water connection.



- BISAG has successfully implemented the GIS module and its integration with the e-Chhawani portal is done by Bharat Electronics Limited (BEL).

### Prashasan Gaon Ki Aur'- Nation-wide campaign for Redressal of Public Grievances and Improving Service Delivery

- The Department of Administrative Reforms and Public Grievances (DARPG), Ministry of Personnel, Public Grievances and Pensions in collaboration with Ministry of External Affairs, Department of Promotion of Industry and Internal Trade, Department of Personnel & Training, Department of Pensions and Pensioners' Welfare and Ministry of Panchayati Raj and Rural Development is celebrating **Good Governance Week on 20-25th December** as part of Azadi Ka Amrit Mahotsav celebration.
- The Minister will inaugurate the **Exhibition on Good Governance Practices – “शासन की बदलती तस्वीर”**. Dr **Jitendra Singh** will launch the **Good Governance Week Portal** and will release the booklet on 2-year achievements of **DARPG**.
- A film on “Prashasan Gaon Ki Aur” will be screened on this occasion.
- The theme of **Good Governance Week** is “Prashasan Gaon Ki Aur”- a Nation-wide campaign for Redressal of Public Grievances and Improving Service Delivery will be held in all Districts, States, and Union Territories of India.
- The progress of the Good Governance Week will be monitored on a portal [www.pgportal.gov.in/ggw](http://www.pgportal.gov.in/ggw).
- Every District Collector will be presenting one successful good governance practice of the district and one successfully redressed Public Grievance case on the portal.

### Ministry of Panchayati Raj organises National Webinar on Atmanirbhar Panchayats in commemoration of Azadi Ka Amrit Mahotsav

- As the Nation is celebrating 75 years of Independence as ‘**Azadi Ka Amrit Mahotsav**’, the Ministry of **Panchayati Raj** is undertaking several activities and initiatives to uphold the Prime Minister’s vision of ‘**Atmanirbhar Bharat**’ in the light of the fact that the vision of ‘**Atmanirbhar Bharat**’ could only be achieved if the Panchayati Raj Institutions of the country become self-dependent in all aspects, **Sunil Kumar, Secretary, Ministry of Panchayati Raj**.
- Thus, it would be apt to say that only ‘**Atmanirbhar Panchayats**’ can lay the foundation for ‘**Atmanirbhar Bharat**’.
- Shri Sunil Kumar, Secretary, Ministry of Panchayati Raj delivered a keynote address while declaring open of a day-long National Webinar with the theme ‘**Atmanirbhar Panchayats – Role of Technology, Entrepreneurship and Harnessing Energy in Achieving Self-reliance for Sustainable Development**’.

- The **sixth in a series of National Webinars** organized by the Ministry of Panchayati Raj in commemoration of Azadi Ka Amrit Mahotsav since its nationwide launch on 12 March 2021.

#### **Nitin Gadkari lays foundation stone and inaugurates 232 km of National Highways of Rs.4160 Crore in Uttar Pradesh**

- Union Minister for Road Transport and Highways Shri **Nitin Gadkari** has laid Foundation stone and **Inaugurated 232 km of National Highways at a cost of Rs.4160 Crore** in Jaunpur and Mirzapur in **Uttar Pradesh** in presence of Chief Minister of Uttar Pradesh Shri Yogi Adityanath.
- In Jaunpur Shri Gadkari laid foundation stone for 3 national highway projects **which will cover 86 kms with a total cost of Rs 1,123 crore.**
- In Mirzapur Shri Gadkari **inaugurated Four National highways projects worth Rs 3037 crore** with total length of 146 kms.
- These road projects will boost the development of state, provide better connectivity in the region and will double the pace of development of the state.

#### **CCI approves acquisition of shareholding in Air India Limited**

- **Competition Commission of India (CCI)** approves acquisition of shareholding in Air India Limited, Air India Express Limited and **Air India SATS Airport Services Private Limited by Talace Private Limited.**
- The proposed combination envisages acquisition of 100% equity share capital of Air India Limited (Air India) and Air India Express Limited (AIXL), and **50% equity share capital of Air India SATS Airport Services Private Limited (AISATS)** by Talace Private Limited (Talace).
- **Talace** is a wholly owned subsidiary of Tata Sons.
- Tata Sons is an investment holding company, which is registered as a core investment company with the **Reserve Bank of India (RBI)** and classified as a **“Systemically Important Non-Deposit Taking Core Investment Company”**.
- **Air India** is wholly owned by the **Government of India**.
- Air India, along with AIXL, is primarily engaged in the business of providing domestic scheduled air passenger transport service, international scheduled air passenger transport service, and air cargo transport services.
- **ISATS** is engaged in the business of providing ground handling services at the following domestic airports i.e. Delhi, Bengaluru, Hyderabad, Mangalore and Thiruvananthapuram, as well as cargo handling services at Bengaluru airport.

#### **CCI approves acquisition up to 16.94% equity share capital of IRB Infrastructure Developers Limited by Bricklayers Investment Pte. Ltd**

- The **Competition Commission of India (CCI)** approves acquisition up to **16.94% equity share capital of IRB Infrastructure Developers Limited** by Bricklayers Investment Pte. Ltd. under Section 31(1) of the Competition Act, 2002.
- The proposed combination relates to GIC Investor's proposed acquisition of up to 16.94% of the share capital of the Target on a fully diluted **basis and non-fully diluted basis**, through the subscription of new shares issued by way of a preferential issue on a private placement.
- The proposed combination is in the nature of an acquisition and falls under **Section 5(a) of the Competition Act, 2002**.
- GIC Investor is a **foreign direct investor**, which is a **wholly owned subsidiary of GIC Infra Holdings Pte. Ltd.** (GIC Infra) which, in turn, is a wholly owned subsidiary of GIC (Ventures) Private Limited (GIC Ventures).
- GIC Investor was incorporated on 22 May 2019 and is a special purpose vehicle (SPV) **organized as a private limited company in Singapore** that is part of a group of investment holding companies managed by **GIC Special Investments Private Limited (GICSI)**.
- **Target is a public company incorporated in India in 1998** and is the holding company of the IRB Group.

#### CCI approves acquisition of controlling stake in Forbes Enviro Solutions Limited by Lunolux Limited

- The **Competition Commission of India (CCI)** approves acquisition of controlling stake in **Forbes Enviro Solutions Limited** by Lunolux Limited under **Section 31(1) of the Competition Act, 2002**.
- The proposed combination pertains to the acquisition of controlling stake in FESL by LL through the primary **acquisition of up to 72.56%** and the subsequent acquisition of up to 26% by way of an open offer under the provisions of the SEBI (Substantial Acquisition of Shares and Takeovers) Regulations, 2011.
- FESL will house the **Health and Safety Business of Eureka Forbes Limited** - i.e., business of (a) water purifiers, (b) air purifiers, (c) security solutions, (d) vacuum cleaners and (e) electric air cleaning systems.
- The proposed combination is in the nature of an acquisition and falls under **Section 5(a) of the Competition Act, 2002**.

#### NITI Aayog signs a Statement of Intent with United Nations World Food Program (WFP)

- **NITI Aayog signed a Statement of Intent with United Nations World Food Program (WFP)** on 20th December 2021.
- The partnership focuses on mainstreaming of millets and supporting India in taking lead globally in knowledge exchange using the opportunity of **2023 as an International Year of Millets**.
- Further, the partnership will aim at building resilient livelihoods for small-holder farmers and adaptation capacities to climate change and transforming food systems.

- The Sol focuses on strategic and technical collaboration between NITI Aayog and WFP, **to strengthen the climate resilient agriculture** for enhanced food and nutrition security in India.
- Recognizing the importance of millets, **Government of India observed 2018 as a year of millets** to encourage and **promote the millet production**.
- Leading this initiative further, Gol spearheaded the **UNGA resolution for declaring 2023 as International Year of Millets**.
- Numerous steps have been taken to promote millets including establishment of centre for Excellence, Integration of nutri-cereals in **National Food Security Act** and **establishment of Millet Mission in multiple states**.
- Despite this, various challenges in terms of production, distribution and adaptability among consumers remain.
- Under the distribution system, it is time that we shift the focus of food distribution programmes from **'calories fundamentalism'** to providing a more diversified food basket, including coarse grains and millets to improve the nutritional status of pre-school children and women of reproductive age.

#### **PANEX-21 inaugurated at Pune**

- **PANEX-21**, a multi-national - multi-agency exercise is being organised at **Pune** from **20-22 Dec 2021**.
- **Aim :**
- To foster common and develop capabilities in Disaster Management aspects for the BIMSTEC nations.
- It deals with various aspects related to conduct of effective humanitarian assistance and disaster relief operations during a natural disaster.
- The exercise is being attended by delegates and subject matter experts from **India, Bangladesh, Nepal, Bhutan, Myanmar, Sri Lanka and Thailand**.
- The inaugural address was delivered by **Lt Gen JS Nain, Army Commander, Southern Command at Armed Forces Medical College, Pune**.
- **Gen Manoj Mukund Naravane, Chief of Army Staff (COAS)** in his Keynote address over video conference.
- It is a well laid down procedure and coordination amongst BIMSTEC nations can be of huge assistance in saving human lives.
- The exercise will focus on reviewing the process of notification, preparedness and response mechanism.
- The member states shall promote their best practices and also recommend the evolution of BIMSTEC joint response mechanism for Disaster Management.
- Subject matter experts like **Dr Soumya Swaminathan** Chief Scientist WHO, **Dr VK Paul**, NITI Aayog amongst others attended the meet.

### Bharati Pravin Pawar inaugurates National Oxygen Stewardship Program

- **Bharati Pravin Pawar**, Union Minister of State for Health and Family Welfare **inaugurated the National Oxygen Stewardship** Program of the Union Health Ministry, at **AIIMS New Delhi**.
- The initiative aims to **empower all healthcare workers engaged in Oxygen management** and administration with the essential knowledge and skills to ensure rational utilization and avoid any wastage of medical Oxygen, especially in resource constraint settings.
- It envisages to identify and train at least one **“Oxygen Steward”** in each district across the country.
- These trained professionals would be responsible for leading the training on Oxygen therapy and management in their respective districts and also support audit of oxygen delivery and preparedness for a surge scenario.
- Government of India has sanctioned more than **1500 Pressure Swing Adsorption (PSA) oxygen generation plants** of which 1463 have been commissioned which include, **1225 PSA plants** which have been installed and commissioned under **PMCARES Fund** in every district of the country.

### Atal Innovation Mission, NITI Aayog launches Vernacular Innovation Program (VIP) to Empower Innovators

- With an ambition to empower innovators and entrepreneurs across the country, **Atal Innovation Mission (AIM)**, NITI Aayog has come up with a first of its kind **Vernacular Innovation Program (VIP)**, which will enable innovators and entrepreneurs in India to have access to the innovation ecosystem in 22 scheduled languages by the Government of India.
- To build the necessary capacity for the VIP, AIM has identified and will be training a **Vernacular Task Force (VTF)** in each of the 22 scheduled languages.
- Each task force comprises of vernacular language teachers, subject experts, technical writers, and the leadership of regional **Atal Incubation Centers (AICs)**.
- To get the program rolling, **AIM NITI Aayog** is launching a train-the-trainer program where it will collaborate with the **Design Department of IIT Delhi** to coach the VTF in design thinking and entrepreneurship and the adaptation of these subjects in **the 22 languages and cultures**.
- Furthermore, industry mentors have joined hands to lend design thinking expertise, and CSR sponsors have agreed to generously support the program.
- Upon training the task force **over the period of December 2021 to April 2022**, the ecosystem will be opened to vernacular innovators.
- Launching the VIP, Vice Chairman NITI Aayog Dr. Rajiv Kumar, India derives its identity from the diverse social and cultural fabric with regional languages being one of the most prominent cultural assets.

## Mansukh Mandaviya and Shri Bhupendra Patel jointly inaugurate pre-event of 10th Vibrant Gujarat Global Summit 2022

- The Government of Gujarat is organising the 10th Vibrant Gujarat Global Summit 2022, from 10 -12 January 2022, at **Mahatma Mandir Convention and Exhibition Centre, Gandhinagar, Gujarat.**
- A pre-event summit has been organised by the Health & Family Welfare Department, Government of Gujarat, with a **theme “Holistic Healthcare focused on Pharmaceuticals and Medical Devices”** on December 18, 2021, in Pandit Deendayal Energy University, Gandhinagar, Gujarat.
- The pre-event summit was inaugurated by Shri **Mansukh Mandaviya, Union Minister for Health & Family Welfare and Chemicals & Fertilizers** and Shri Bhupendra Patel, Chief Minister of Gujarat. Ms. S. Aparna, IAS, Secretary, Department of Pharmaceuticals, Government of India, Dr. Sarah McMullen, India Office Country Director, United States Food and Drug Control Administration (US FDA) and Dr. V. G. Somani, Drugs Controller General of India were also present on the occasion.
- The focus of the pre-event summit was on the following:-
- Boosting Bulk Drug Production through Production Linked Incentive (PLI) Scheme
- Reducing India’s Dependence in Active Pharmaceutical Ingredients (APIs & Medical Devices)
- Jan Aushadhi Kendras – Generic Medicines

## DPIIT to organize a National Workshop to brainstorm on Next Phase of Reforms for reducing compliance burden

- In a major bid to realize the nation’s goals of improving **“Ease of living”** and **“Ease of doing business”**, the **Department for Promotion of Industry and Internal Trade (DPIIT)** is conducting a National Workshop on the **“Next Phase of Reforms for Reducing Compliance Burden”** on 22nd December, 2021.
- The Workshop will witness wide participation from across Central Ministries and States/UTs.
- The Workshop would have three parallel breakout sessions.
- The theme of the **first would be “Breaking Silos and Enhancing Synergies among Government Departments”**.
- This session would focus, among others, on integration between Central Ministries/Departments and State single window systems, deliberation on single business ID, etc.
- The second is based on the theme of **“National Single Sign-on for Efficient Delivery of Citizen Services”** which would deal with deliberations on on-boarding all citizen services by Central and State Government services under one roof – **“National Citizen Centric Portal”** and the creation of a **‘National Digital Profile’** for all citizens that shall be used to pre-fill Government forms and also as a tool to citizen benefit welfare discovery.



- The third Breakout Session is **themed 'Effective Grievance Redressal'** and the session would have discussion on several topics like usage of next generation technology in effective grievance redressal, accountability -based mechanism for enhanced effectiveness of redressal quality.

#### **Amit Shah chaired the Consultative Committee of the Ministry of Home Affairs on the topic "Cyber Crime: Threats, Challenges and Response"**

- The union minister for Home and Cooperation, Shri **Amit Shah**, **chaired** the Consultative Committee of the Ministry of Home Affairs on the topic **"Cyber Crime: Threats, Challenges and Response"** in New Delhi.
- The Union Home Minister, under the leadership of Prime Minister Shri Narendra Modi, the Ministry of Home Affairs has taken several important steps to tackle cybercrime.
- In the last seven years, the work of setting up the infrastructure to deal with cyber-crimes in the country has been completed fully up to the police post level.
- **Crime and Criminal Tracking Network and Systems (CCTNS)** has now been implemented in all 16,347 police stations of the country.
- In 99 per cent of the police stations, **100 per cent FIRs are being registered directly in the CCTNS.**
- **e-initiatives by the Ministry of Home Affairs** to deal with cyber-crimes, such as the National Cybercrime Reporting Portal (NCRP) facilitates victims/complainants to report cybercrime online.
- So far more than 6 lakh complaints have been received and 12,776 FIRs have been registered.
- The **National Cybercrime Threat Analysis Unit (NCTAU)** has issued **142 cybercrime** prevention advisories and has **blocked 266 mobile apps.**
- 3,800 forensic services were provided by the National Cybercrime Forensic Laboratory (NCFL).

#### **AIM, NITI Aayog & UNCDF announce first AgriTech cohort under South-South Innovation platform**

- **Atal Innovation Mission (AIM), NITI Aayog and the United Nations Capital Development Fund (UNCDF)** rolled out their **first Agri-Tech Challenge** cohort for its ambitious innovative Agri-tech program that aims to help smallholder farmers across Asia and Africa to address their challenges in the aftermath of the pandemic.
- The event was held on 21st December, 2021.
- **AIM, NITI Aayog in partnership with UNCDF, Bill & Melinda Gates Foundation and Rabo Foundation** launched a **South-South innovation platform** to enable cross-border exchange of innovations, insights and investments in July this year 2021.
- Through this platform, cross-border collaborations among emerging markets across **India, Indonesia, Malawi, Malaysia, Kenya, Uganda, Zambia** would be enabled.

- For its first platform AgriTech Challenge Cohort and Agri-Fintech innovators, applications were invited to facilitate their expansion to the international markets **through two tracks- Main track and AIM track.**
- A total of 10 high-growth innovators have been selected in the Main track, out of a total 100 applications.
- The key objective of the main track applications was '**Expansion** – Support solution pilot in the chosen international market.'

#### **CABINET APPROVALS:**

- **Minimum Support Price (MSP) for Copra for 2022 season:**
- The **Cabinet Committee on Economic Affairs** chaired by the Prime Minister Shri Narendra Modi, has given its approval for the **Minimum Support Prices (MSPs) for copra for 2022 season.**
- The MSP for Fair Average Quality (FAQ) of milling copra **has been increased to Rs10,590/- per quintal** for 2022 season from Rs.10,335/- per quintal in 2021 and the MSP for ball copra has been increased to Rs.11,000/- per quintal for 2022 season from Rs.10,600/- per quintal in 2021.
- This is to ensure a return of 51.85 percent for milling copra and 57.73 percent for ball copra over the all India weighted average cost of production.
- The increase in MSP for copra for 2022 season is in line with the principle of fixing the MSP at a level of at least 1.5 times the all India weighted average cost of production as announced by the Government in the **Budget 2018-19.**
- The decision is based on recommendations of the **Commission for Agricultural Costs and Prices (CACP).**
- It assures **a minimum of 50 percent as margin of profit** as one of the important and progressive steps towards making possible **doubling of farmers' incomes by 2022.**
- **The National Agricultural Cooperative Marketing Federation of India Limited** and National Cooperative Consumer Federation of India Limited will continue to act as Central Nodal Agencies to undertake price support operations at the MSP in the coconut growing States.
- **Memorandum of Understanding between Competition Commission of India and Competition Commission of Mauritius:**
- The Union Cabinet chaired by the Prime Minister Shri Narendra Modi has approved the signing of **Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) between Competition Commission of India (CCI) and Competition Commission of Mauritius (CCM) for promotion and strengthening of co-operation in competition law and policy.**
- **Implementation Strategy and Targets**
- The MoU aims to promote and strengthen cooperation in matters of competition law and policy through exchange of information, sharing of best practices and capacity building initiatives.

- It is intended to promote mutual co-operation in the areas of technical co-operation, experience sharing and enforcement co-operation.
- The resultant outcomes would benefit consumers at large and promote equity and inclusiveness.

**Impact: The MoU between CCI and CCM is expected to:**

- Address anticompetitive restraints that affect international trade;
- Improve enforcement of the Competition Act, 2002 by CCI;
- Promote understanding of competition policy;
- Capacity building;
- Bring diplomatic benefits;
- Ministry of Corporate Affairs, **Competition Commission of India on the Indian side and Competition Commission of Mauritius on the other side would be major beneficiaries in this Memorandum of Understanding.**
- **Section 18 of the Competition Act, 2002 permits CCI to enter into any memorandum or arrangement with any agency of any foreign country for the purpose of discharging its duties or performing its functions under the Act.**
- **Memorandum of Understanding between Institute of Chartered Accountants of India (ICAI) and The Polish Chamber of Statutory Auditors (PIBR)**
- The Union Cabinet, chaired by the Prime Minister Shri Narendra Modi, has approved the signing of Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) between the **Institute of Chartered Accountants of India (ICAI) and the Polish Chamber of Statutory Auditors (PIBR)** to establish mutual co-operation in the areas of Member Management, Professional Ethics, Technical Research, CPD, Professional Accountancy Training, Audit Quality Monitoring, Advancement of Accounting Knowledge, Professional and Intellectual Development.
- The proposed MoU **aims to strengthen co-operation in the matters of study and application of new innovative methods in the field of audit** and accounting including application of blockchain, smart contract system, transition from Traditional Accounting to Cloud Accounting etc.
- ICAI members are holding middle to top level positions in various organisations across the countries and can influence the decision/policy making strategies of respective organizations of a country.
- ICAI through its vast network of **Chapters and Representative Offices in 73 cities of 47 countries** of the world is committed to play an important role by sharing the prevalent practices in these countries so that the Government of India can adopt the best practices being followed by them to attract foreign investment and to encourage them to establish their setup in India.

- This MoU will benefit Ministry of Corporate Affairs, Institute of Chartered Accountants of India and The Polish Chamber of Statutory Auditors (PIBR).
- The Institute of Chartered Accountants of India (ICAI) is a statutory body established under the Chartered Accountants Act, 1949 for regulating the profession of Chartered Accountants in India.
- ICAI has contributed immensely in the field of education, professional development, maintenance of high accounting, auditing and ethical standards in furtherance of the profession of Chartered accountants, which is recognized globally.
- The Polish Chamber of Statutory Auditors (PIBR) a self-government of Statutory Auditors was established in accordance with the Act of October 1991 on auditing and publishing financial statements and on statutory auditors which came into force on 1 January 1992 to regulate the audit profession in Poland.

#### Bhupender Yadav has inaugurated 35th edition of "Hunar Haat" in New Delhi

- Hunar Haat", the "Popular and Perfect Brand" of "Vocal for Local", has inaugurated by Union Minister for Environment, Forest and Climate Change and Labour and Employment Shri **Bhupender Yadav** and Union Minister of State for External Affairs and Culture **Meenakshi Lekhi** on December 23, 2021 at **Jawaharlal Nehru Stadium in New Delhi**.
- More than 700 artisans, craftsmen from over 30 States / Union Territories are participating in this 14-day "Hunar Haat" being organised from December 23, 2021 to January 5, 2022.
- The "Hunar Haat" has proved a "powerful perfect platform" of "3Vs"- "Vishwakarma Virasat Ka Vikas".
- The Government has not only protected the country's legacy of art and craftsmanship, it has also provided new energy and market and opportunities to indigenous products, he said.
- More than 7 lakh 50 thousand artisans, craftsmen and people associated with them have been provided employment and self-employment opportunities through "Hunar Haat" in the last about 6 years.
- Exquisite and elegant indigenous handmade products from more than 30 States and Union Territories including Assam, Andhra Pradesh, Bihar, Gujarat, Ladakh, Jammu-Kashmir, Punjab, Karnataka, Madhya Pradesh, Uttar Pradesh, Rajasthan, Jharkhand, Nagaland, Meghalaya, Delhi, Maharashtra, Uttarakhand, West Bengal, Manipur, Goa, Puducherry, Chhattisgarh, Telangana, Chandigarh, Haryana are available in this 35th edition of "Hunar Haat".
- Traditional dishes from different regions of the country are also available at this "Hunar Haat".

#### Prime Minister addresses the 2nd meeting of National Committee on "Azadi Ka Amrit Mahotsav"

- The Prime Minister, Shri **Narendra Modi** addressed the 2nd National Committee meeting on Azadi Ka Amrit Mahotsav in New Delhi.

- Various members of the National Committee attended the meeting including Lok Sabha Speaker, Governors, Union Ministers, Chief Ministers, political leaders, officials, media personalities, spiritual Leaders, artists and film personalities, and eminent persons from other walks of life. Secretary Culture, Shri Govind Mohan gave a presentation on the overview of activities of Azadi Ka Amrit Mahotsav.
- **The first meeting of the National Committee was organised on 8th March 2021 before the launch of Azadi Ka Amrit Mahotsav by the Prime Minister on 12th March 2021.**
- The Prime Minister emphasised that this is an **opportune time to set our eyes on 2047** when the country will celebrate 100 years of independence.
- It is at that time that the current generation will be at the helm of affairs and the nation's destiny will be in their hands.
- Therefore, it is important to decide what we must inculcate in them now so that they will be able to make big contributions in the future towards the country.
- The Prime Minister further elaborated that for the current generation to contribute meaningfully to nation building, it is important that we inculcate in them the importance of duty to make a better India.
- The Prime Minister concluded that as we observe Azadi Ka Amrit Mahotsav, we should surge ahead with a focused approach setting new targets for ourselves for 2047.

#### **Govt extends Pradhan Mantri Garib Kalyan Anna Yojana till March 2022:**

- Under **Pradhan Mantri Garib Kalyan Ann Yojana**, Centre is providing five-kilogram food grains per person per month free of cost to all beneficiaries covered under **the National Food Security Act**.
- The scheme is a food security welfare scheme that was envisaged by the Prime Minister Narendra Modi to provide assistance and help mitigate the economic impact of Covid-19.
- The Government in March last year had announced the distribution of additional food grains **free-of-cost to about 80 Crore National Food Security Act beneficiaries**.
- The government will be incurring an expenditure of nearly **two lakh 60 thousand crore rupees** on **Pradhan Mantri Garib Kalyan Ann Yojana**.
- Last month, Union Cabinet had approved the extension for this scheme for a period of another four-month, **till March 2022**.

#### **Union Minister Arjun Munda launches 'TRIFED Van Dhan' a Pictorial Chronicle of Tribal grit and enterprise:**

- Union Tribal Affairs Minister, **Arjun Munda** has launched 'TRIFED Van Dhan', a Pictorial Chronicle of Tribal **grit and enterprise**.
- It documents the work done for the promotion of tribal enterprise in the country and the achievements of tribal entrepreneurs under the **Van Dhan Vikas Yojana**.

- He also launched the formation of 14 Honey Farmer Producer Organizations, **MIS Portal for MSP for Minor Forest Produces**, communication campaign **SAMVAAD** and promotional videos for promoting TRIBES INDIA.
- Centre is reaching out to tribals through a multidimensional work plan for their upliftment.
- He stressed the need for effective connection and communication with tribal community.
- The launch of MIS portal will ensure ready availability of procurement data that can help in effective decision making and enhancing overall transparency.
- **Arjun Munda inaugurates 14 Honey Farmer Producer Organizations (FPOs) of TRIFED:**
- Initiatives included the launch of the **TRIFED VanDhan Chronicle**, an in-depth resource on the Van Dhan Yojana and TRIFED's activities in this important scheme; **9 promotional videos on TRIBES INDIA, TRIFOOD, MSP for MFP and Van Dhan Yojana made by National Film Development Corporation (NFDC) and 14 Honey Farmer Producer Organisations.**
- In addition, **UNICEF and TRIFED signed an MoU on Tribal Samvaad Network.**
- Beekeeping activity has been recognized as one of the important activities by Govt of India for its promotion and development to achieve **"Sweet Revolution"** in the endeavor of enhancing income of farmers.
- A central scheme titled **"Formation and Promotion of 10,000 Farmer Producer Organizations (FPOs)"** was launched to ensure economies of scale for farmers over the next five years.
- **The National Bee Board (NBB), under the National Beekeeping & Honey Mission (NHBM),** has planned to develop the scientific bee-keeping value chain for honey across 100 clusters in the country.
- In continuation with its partnership with **UNICEF**, **TRIFED rolled out a campaign "Covid teeka sangh, Surakshit van, dhan udyam"** which was aimed at accelerating Covid-19 vaccination in tribal communities.
- The focus of the campaign is on three key Js i.e., Jeevan (Life), Jeevika (Livelihood) and Jaagrookta (Awareness and the mantra of the campaign was **"Samvad se Sambandh."**
- It had been launched by Minister of Tribal Affairs in collaboration with **UNICEF and WHO** and is being currently rolled out in 100 tribal districts across India.

#### **MoHUA launches roadmap to make Urban India 'Garbage Free:**

- **The Ministry of Housing and Urban Affairs (MoHUA),** Government of India has launched the **'Azadi@75 Star Rating Protocol of Garbage Free Cities- Toolkit 2022'**, the most important governance tool of waste management – the Star Rating Protocol for Garbage Free Cities.



- Hon'ble **Prime Minister** launched **Swachh Bharat Mission-Urban 2.0**, with the overall vision of creating "**Garbage Free Cities**" (GFC), thereby placing India on a new trajectory of growth towards an ecosystem of holistic sanitation and waste management.
- With the vision of making cities '**Garbage Free**', **SBM-U 2.0** is focused on achieving **100% waste processing** along with remediation of legacy dumpsites, construction and demolition waste and plastic waste management.
- The new protocol combined with the continuous assessment through-out the year will further encourage cities to participate and realise the vision of "**Garbage Free Cities**"

#### **Mansukh Mandaviya chairs a high-level meeting to promote domestic production of P&K Fertilisers:**

- Union Minister for Chemicals and Fertilizers Shri **Mansukh Mandaviya** has chaired a high-level meeting in which it was decided to continue support to **domestic industry for production of P&K fertilizers**
- And propose additional provisions in the **present NBS Policy** to promote domestic production of P&K fertilizers in the country.
- This decision will help in utilizing the unutilized domestic production capacity of these fertilizers and promote **Atmanirbhar Bharat**.

#### **NMCG & TERI Launch Centre of Excellence on Water Reuse:**

- The Director General of **National Mission for Clean Ganga (NMCG)** and the Director General of **The Energy and Resources Institute (TERI)** launched the NMCG-TERI's Centre of Excellence (CoE) on Water Reuse at the **TERI Headquarters in New Delhi**.
- The CoE on Water Reuse is the first of its kind to be established in the country through a collaboration between **NMCG and TERI**.
- The Centre is a quadripartite alliance between NMCG, TERI, industry partners and industry representative bodies, to come up at the **TERI campus in Gwal Pahari, Gurugram**, will be meeting the objectives of the **Ganga Knowledge Centre (GKC)** to design and foster research and innovation, including identification of knowledge gaps for research and need for new ideas, supporting targeted research and spurring and nurturing needed innovation.
- Hence this CoE is also the first of its kind that will match the activities envisaged under GKC.
- The idea behind cleaning the Ganga, or a river or a city is to make them sustainable in the long run; sustainability from the point of view of looking at it not as wastewater, but as a resource that can be reused.
- We need to have dialogues with industries that are working in the area of wastewater treatment, establishing treatment plants, enhancing water reuse and going to provide treated water for safe reuse

### Good Governance Index 2021 launched on Good Governance Day by Amit Shah:

- Union Minister of Home Affairs and Minister of Cooperation, Mr Amit Shah has released the **Good Governance Index 2021 prepared by DARPG on Good Governance Day at Vigyan Bhawan, New Delhi.**
- Good Governance Index, GGI 2021 Framework covered ten sectors and 58 indicators.
- The sectors of GGI 2020-21 are:
  - Agriculture and Allied Sectors,
  - Commerce & Industries,
  - Human Resource Development,
  - Public Health,
  - Public Infrastructure & Utilities,
  - Economic Governance,
  - Social Welfare & Development,
  - Judicial & Public Security,
  - Environment, and
  - Citizen-Centric Governance.
- The GGI 2020-21 categorises States and UTs into four categories, i.e.,
  - Other States – Group A;
  - Other States – Group B;
  - North-East and Hill States; and
  - Union Territories.
- **Gujarat, Maharashtra and Goa top the composite rank score covering 10 sectors.**
- GGI 2021 says that Gujarat registered 12.3 percent increase and Goa registered 24.7 percent increase over GGI 2019 indicators.
- **Gujarat has performed strongly in 5 of the 10 sectors including economic governance,** human resource development, public infrastructure and utilities, social welfare and development, judiciary and public safety.
- **Maharashtra has performed strongly in agriculture and allied sector,** human resource development, public infrastructure and utilities, social welfare and development.
- **Goa has performed strongly in agriculture and allied sector,** commerce and industry, public infrastructure and utilities, economic governance, social welfare and development and environment.

### NITI Aayog to release the fourth edition of “The Healthy States, Progressive India” ranking States performance:

- NITI Aayog as the premier policy ‘Think Tank’ of the Government of India, believes in the mantra ‘*what gets measured gets done.*’

- As a part of cooperative & competitive federalism, NITI Aayog and the Ministry of Health and Family Welfare (MoHFW) work to continuously nudge states/UTs towards improvements in health outcomes.
- In 2017 the **National Institution for Transforming India (NITI Aayog)** in collaboration with the Ministry of Health and Family Welfare (MoHFW) and the **World Bank** initiated an **annual Health Index** for tracking Overall Performance and Incremental Performance on health across all states and Union Territories (UTs).
- The objective of the **Annual Health Index** is to **track progress on health outcomes and health systems performance**, develop a healthy competition and encourage cross-learning among states and UTs.
- Health Index Scores and rankings for states and UTs are generated to assess incremental performance (year-to-year progress) and overall performance (current performance).
- The exercise is expected to help drive state/UT's efforts towards the achievement of health-related Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) including those related to Universal Health Coverage (UHC) and other health outcomes.
- Health Index is a weighted composite score **incorporating 24 indicators covering key aspects of health performance**.
- The importance of this annual tool is **reemphasized by MOHFW's decision** to link this Health Index to incentives under National Health Mission.

#### **National Book Trust announces of 75 Selected Authors under the PM- YUVA Mentorship Scheme:**

- **National Book Trust, India**, under Ministry of Education, has announced the results of the All-India Contest organized on the **Theme 'National Movement of India'** under the **PM-YUVA Mentorship Scheme** as part of **Azadi Ka Amrit Mahotsav** programmes.
- As per the Scheme, **75 Authors** were to be selected through this contest for a Scholarship-cum-Mentorship Scheme for the young authors **below the age of 30 years**.
- The All-India Contest was organized from 1<sup>st</sup> June-31<sup>st</sup> July 2021 through **MyGov and National Book Trust, India platforms**.
- Nearly 16000 entries in 22 **Official languages and English** were received from all across the country including some from Indian Diaspora Community.
- All the book proposals were read by multiple panels of experts and went through three layers of scrutiny.
- It may be recalled that during **his Mann Ki Baat address dated 31<sup>st</sup> January 2021**, the Prime Minister Shri
- Out of the 75 selected authors, 38 are males and 37 are females.
- Further, **two are below 15 years, whereas there are 16 authors in the age-group of 15-20 years**, 32 fall in the age group of 21-25 years and 25 authors are in the age group of 26-30 years.
- **PM to visit Kanpur on 28 December and inaugurate Kanpur Metro Rail Project:**

- Prime Minister **Shri Narendra Modi will visit Kanpur** on 28 December 2021 and inaugurate the completed section of **Kanpur Metro Rail Project**.
- During the programme, the Prime Minister will also inaugurate the Bina-Panki Multiproduct Pipeline Project. Prior to this, Prime Minister will attend the **54th Convocation Ceremony of IIT Kanpur**.
- Improving urban mobility has been one of the key focus areas of the Prime Minister. The inauguration of the completed section of the Kanpur Metro Rail Project is yet another step in this direction.
- Prime Minister will inspect the Kanpur Metro Rail Project and undertake a metro ride from IIT metro station to Geeta Nagar.
- The entire length of the **Metro Rail Project in Kanpur is 32 Km**, and is being built at a cost of over Rs 11,000 crore.
- Prime Minister will **inaugurate the Bina-Panki Multiproduct Pipeline Project**.
- **The 356 Km long project has a capacity of around 3.45 million metric tonne per annum.**
- Extending from Bina refinery in **Madhya Pradesh to Panki in Kanpur**, the project has been built at a cost of over Rs 1500 crore.
- Prime Minister will be the Chief Guest of the 54th Convocation of IIT Kanpur.
- During the convocation, all the students will be issued digital degrees through an in-house blockchain-driven technology developed at the Institute under the National Blockchain Project.

#### **PM to visit Mandi has inaugurated & lay foundation stone of hydropower projects:**

- Prime Minister **Shri Narendra Modi will visit Mandi**, Himachal Pradesh on 27 December 2021. He will inaugurate and lay the foundation stone of **hydropower projects worth over Rs 11,000 crore**.
- Prior to the event, he will preside over the second ground breaking ceremony of **Himachal Pradesh Global Investors' Meet**
- Prime Minister will lay the foundation stone of Renukaji Dam project. Lying pending for around three decades, the project was made possible through the vision of cooperative federalism of the Prime Minister, when six states viz Himachal Pradesh, Uttar Pradesh, Haryana, Rajasthan, Uttarakhand and Delhi were brought together by the Centre for making the project possible.
- **The 40 MW project will be built at a cost of around Rs 7000 crore.** It will prove to be immensely beneficial for Delhi, which will be able to receive around 500 million cubic metre water supply per year.
- Prime Minister will lay the foundation stone of the **Luhri Stage 1 Hydro Power Project**.
- The 210 MW project will be built at a cost of over Rs 1800 crore. It will lead to generation of over 750 million units of electricity per year.
- Prime Minister will also lay the foundation stone of **Dhulasidh Hydro Power Project**. This will be the first

hydropower project of Hamirpur district.

- The 66 MW project will be built at a cost of over Rs 680 crore.
- Prime Minister will inaugurate the **Sawra-Kuddu Hydro Power Project**. The 111 MW Project has been built at a cost of around Rs 2080 crore.

#### **Deendayal Antyodaya Yojana-National Rural Livelihoods Mission Overdraft facility for women SHG members launched:**

- **Deendayal Antyodaya Yojana - National Rural Livelihoods Mission (DAY-NRLM)** organised a special event called “**Discourse on Rural Financial Inclusion**” on 18<sup>th</sup> December, 2021 through virtual mode to celebrate 75 years of the independence of the country under **Azadi Ka Amrit Mahotsav**.
- Executive Directors, Chief General Managers/ General Managers, other senior Officials of the banks and Chief Executive Officers/State Managing Directors from the State Rural Livelihoods Missions participated in the programme.
- Charanjit Singh, Joint Secretary, Rural Livelihoods, Ministry of Rural Development welcomed all the participants and Sh. **Nagendra Nath Sinha**, Secretary, Department of Rural Development, Ministry of Rural Development, Govt. of India, **New Delhi inaugurated the programme**.
- As a part of the event, **the facility for overdraft (OD of Rs. 5,000/- to verified SHG members under DAY – NRLM having accounts under the prime Minister Jan Dhan Yojana with Banks was launched by Sh. Nagendra Nath Sinha**, Secretary of Department of Rural Development.
- **Six Women SHG** members from three States i.e., **Rajasthan, Jharkhand and Uttar Pradesh were provided with a cheque of Rs. 5,000 to mark the start of the scheme by the senior officials of the Banks in the presence of Chief Executive Officers/senior officers State Rural Livelihoods Missions at functions organised at State Head Quarters of the respective States**.
- It is estimated that about **5 crore women SHG members under DAY-NRLM** would be benefitted from this facility eventually.

#### **India imposes anti-dumping duty on Chinese goods for 5 years**

- **India** has imposed **anti-dumping duties on five Chinese products**, including certain aluminum goods and some chemicals, for **five years** to guard local manufacturers from cheap imports from the neighboring country.

#### **List of Products :**

- As per separate notifications of the Central Board of Indirect Taxes and Customs (CBIC),
- Flat-rolled products of aluminum

- Hydrofluorocarbon (HFC) component R-32
- Silicone sealant (used in the manufacture of solar photovoltaic modules and thermal power applications)
- Sodium hydrosulfite (used in the dye industry)
- Hydrofluorocarbon mixtures (both have found use in the refrigeration industry).
- These duties were imposed following recommendations of the Commerce Ministry's investigation arm, the **Directorate General of Trade Remedies (DGTR)**.
- DGTR has concluded that these products have been exported to the Indian markets at below normal value, which has resulted in dumping.
- CBIC has also imposed duty for five years on imports of calcined gypsum powder from the United Arab Emirates (UAE), Saudi Arabia, Oman, and Iran.

#### Defence Minister Rajnath Singh e-inaugurates 27 infra projects constructed by BRO:

- Defence Minister Rajnath Singh has e-inaugurated 27 infra projects constructed by Border Roads Organisation (BRO).
- Its roads, tunnels and bridges have reduced the distance and time between places and the BRO has been playing a significant role in the progress of **the nation by building roads, tunnels and other infrastructure in remote areas**.
- The Minister added that in the last six-seven years, the achievements made by BRO are unprecedented and there are some special needs for the development of the border areas and the government has worked at the ground level in this direction.
- The circumstances the country had to face in the northern sector in the past and the way it was able to counter the adversary strongly, could not have been possible without proper infrastructural development.
- The road built at an altitude of **19,000 feet on the Umling-La pass in southern Ladakh**, has now become the world's highest motorable road.
- This road will not only facilitate faster dispatch of armed forces but also give a boost to tourism in the region.

#### Govt to constitute panel to look into AFSPA withdrawal from Nagaland:

- **Nagaland Chief Minister Neiphiu Rio**, the Centre has decided to constitute a **five-member committee** to look into the withdrawal of Armed Forces (Special Powers) **Act, 1958 or AFSPA** from the northeastern state.
- The committee will be **headed by the Ministry of Home Affairs additional secretary** (Northeast), and will include the chief secretary and director general of police of Nagaland, besides inspector general of Assam Rifles (North) and a representative of the **Central Reserve Police Force (CRPF)**.



- The panel will submit its recommendations **within 45 days**, based on which the decision on whether to continue designating Nagaland as a “disturbed area” or withdrawing AFSPA from the state will be taken, a joint statement issued by Rio, Deputy Chief Minister Y Patton and Leader of Naga Peoples’ Front Legislature Party T R Zeliang
- The decision was taken during a meeting chaired by **Union Home Minister Amit Shah in New Delhi** on December 23 to discuss the present situation in Nagaland.
- Karnataka Protection of Right to Freedom of Religion Bill, 2021:
- The Karnataka legislative assembly has passed the Protection of Right to Freedom of Religion Bill, 2021 popularly known as the anti-conversion bill amid protests.
- The bill is being opposed, tagging it as “anti-people”, “inhuman”, “unconstitutional”, “anti poor” and “draconian”.
- According to Law & Parliamentary Affairs Minister, **J C Madhuswamy**, **initiation of the bill was started** by the Law Commission of Karnataka under the advice of Congress government in 2016.
- This bill provides for protection of the right to freedom of religion as well as prohibition of unlawful conversion from one religion to another by force, misrepresentation, coercion, undue influence, allurement or by any fraudulent means.
- It has the provision of imprisonment from three to **five years with a fine of Rs 25,000**.
- For violation of provisions with respect to **minors, SC/ST & women**, offenders will be imprisoned from three to **10 years and a not less than Rs 50,000**.
- As per bill, accused will require to pay up to Rs five lakh as compensation to those who were made to convert.
- In cases of mass conversion, there is a provision of 3-10 years jail term along with a fine of up to Rs one lakh.

#### **PM Modi has inaugurated the Kanpur Metro Rail and Bina-Panki multi-product pipeline:**

- **Prime Minister Narendra Modi** has attended the 54th Convocation Ceremony of the Indian Institute of Technology in Kanpur.
- During his visit to Kanpur Mr Modi also inaugurated the completed section of the Metro Rail Project in the city. This section is nine-kilometre long from IIT, Kanpur to Moti Jheel.
- The Prime Minister inspected the Kanpur Metro Rail Project and undertook a metro ride from IIT Metro Station to Geeta Nagar.
- The entire length of the **Metro Rail Project in Kanpur is 32 kilometres** and is being built at a cost of over 11,000 crore rupees.

- The Bina-Panki Multi-product Pipeline Project was also inaugurated by the Prime Minister.
- It is a 356 Km long project with a capacity of around 3.45 million metric tonnes per annum.
- Extending from Bina refinery in Madhya Pradesh to Panki in Kanpur, the project has been built at a cost of over 1,500 crore rupees.
- It will help the region access petroleum products from the Bina refinery.

**PM has visited Uttarakhand and inaugurate & lay foundation stone of 23 projects worth over Rs 17500 crore:**

- Prime Minister Shri Narendra Modi has visited Haldwani, Uttarakhand on 30th December, 2021 and has inaugurated & lay the foundation stone of 23 projects worth over Rs 17500 crore.
- Among the **23 projects**, the foundation stone will be laid for **17 projects worth over Rs 14100 crore**.
- These Projects cover a wide array of sectors/areas across the state including irrigation, road, housing, health infrastructure, industry, sanitation, drinking water supply among others.
- The programme will witness inauguration of 6 projects including multiple road widening projects, a **hydropower project in Pithoragarh and projects to improve sewerage network in Nainital**.
- The cumulative cost of the projects being inaugurated is over Rs 3400 crore.
- Prime Minister will lay the foundation stone of **the Lakhwar Multipurpose Project** to be built at the cost of about Rs 5750 crore.
- This project was first conceived in 1976 and was lying pending for many years.
- Prime Minister will **also inaugurate two sewage treatment plants of 7 MLD and 1.5 MLD capacity** constructed at the cost of about 50 crores at Ramnagar, Nainital.
- Also, Prime Minister will lay the foundation stone of the construction of nine sewage treatment plants (STPs) in Udham Singh Nagar, to be built at the cost of about 200 crores; and a 78 crore project for upgradation of Sewerage system in Nainital.
- Prime Minister will also inaugurate the 5-Megawatt capacity Suringad-II run of the river hydroelectric project built by **Uttarakhand Jal Vidyut Nigam (UJVN) Limited at Munsyari in Pithoragarh district** built at a cost of about Rs 50 crore.

**India has achieved its NDC target with total non-fossil based installed energy capacity of 157.32 GW:**

- At COP 21, as part of its Nationally Determined Contributions (NDCs), India had committed to achieving 40% of its installed electricity capacity from non-fossil energy sources by 2030.
- The country has achieved this target in November 2021 itself.
- The country's installed Renewable Energy (RE) capacity stands at 150.54 GW as on 30.11.2021 while its nuclear energy based installed electricity capacity stands at 6.78 GW.
- This brings the total non-fossil based installed energy capacity to 157.32 GW which is 40.1% of the total

installed electricity capacity of 392.01 GW.

- In line with the Hon'ble Prime Minister's announcement at the recently concluded CoP26, **the Government is committed to achieving 500 GW** of installed electricity capacity from non-fossil fuel sources by the year **2030**.
- During the last 7.5 years, India has witnessed the fastest rate of growth in renewable energy capacity addition among all large economies, with **renewable energy capacity growing 1.97 times** and solar energy expanding over 18 times.
- India's wind power potential at hub height of 120 meters is 695 GW.
- The wind power installed capacity has grown 1.9 times during past 7.5 years to about 40 GW and 9.67 GW of projects are at various stages of commissioning.
- India has the 4th largest wind power capacity in the world.

#### **IIT Madras recognised as Most Innovative Educational Institute in India for third consecutive year:**

- The Indian Institute of Technology Madras (IIT Madras) has been recognised as the Most Innovative Educational Institute in India for the third consecutive year.
- It has been Ranked #1 in the Atal Ranking of Institutions on Innovation Achievements (ARIIA) launched by the Innovation Cell of the Ministry of Education, Government of India.
- IIT Madras is in the 'CFTIs (Centrally Funded Technical Institutions)/Central University/Institute of National Importance (Technical)' category.
- As many as **1,438 higher education institutions** (HEIs), including all IITs, NITs, and IISc, participated in the third edition of **ARIIA Rankings as compared to 674 HEIs last year**.
- This third edition of ARIIA has a special framework for non-technical institutions which will further strengthen the innovation and entrepreneurial ecosystem in our education institutions.
- ARIIA 2021 has rankings for six categories of institutions –
- CFTIs (Centrally Funded Technical Institutions) /Central University/Institute of National Importance (Technical);
- State University and Deemed University (Govt & Govt aided)(technical);
- Government College/Institution (Govt and Govt Aided)(technical);
- University & Deemed University (Self-finance/private)(technical);
- Private college/Institute (self-finance/private)(technical);
- Institute of National Importance, Central University and CFIs (non-technical) and General (non-technical).

#### **Atal Innovation Mission, NITI Aayog releases 'Innovations For You' & 'The Ingenious Tinkerers':**

- Atal Innovation Mission (AIM) NITI Aayog has released the second edition of – 'Innovations for You'- a

compendium of innovations focused on agriculture featuring 70 startups supported by Atal incubation Centers (AICs) of AIM and 'The Ingenious Tinkerers' – a compendium on the innovations on technology featuring 41 innovations from Atal Tinkering Lab (ATL) of India.

- As the nation rejoices the **Azadi ka Amrit Mahotsav – 75th Year of Independence**, both the books are celebration of the success stories of young innovators of India.
- The '**Innovations For You**' is a compilation of successful innovations by the entrepreneurial minds of India solving problems of present for future, while as '**The Ingenious Tinkerers**' is a compilation of the top innovations created by young student innovators who participated in the ATL Marathon - which invites school students to address a problem that they see or face on a day-to-day basis.
- The Ingenious Tinkerers' leveraged the up-and-coming technologies available at ATLs to devise a solution.
- These young tinkerers took it upon themselves to identify their problem statements by interacting with the members of their community and designing a prototype in a manner that fits their needs and demands.
- Their determination to make a difference in their community has paved a way for their innovation to reach the top 41 innovations of India for the ATL Marathon 2019.

#### **PM inaugurates and lays the foundation stone of 23 projects worth over Rs 17500 crore in Uttarakhand:**

- Prime Minister Shri Narendra Modi has inaugurated and laid the foundation stone of 23 projects worth over Rs 17500 crore in Uttarakhand.
- He laid the foundation stone of the **Lakhwar Multipurpose Project which was first conceived in 1976** and was pending for many years.
- He inaugurated and laid the foundation stone of Rs 8700 crore road sector projects.
- These road projects would realise PM's vision to improve connectivity in remote, rural and border areas. **Kailash Mansarovar Yatra** will also get improved connectivity.
- He also laid the foundation stone of **AIIMS Rishikesh satellite centre at Udham Singh Nagar** and Jagjivan Ram Government Medical College at Pithoragarh.
- These satellite centres would be in line with PM's endeavour to provide world-class medical facilities in all parts of the country.
- He laid the foundation stone of Aroma Park at Kashipur and Plastic Industrial Park at Sitarganj and multiple other initiatives in housing, sanitation and drinking water supply across the state.

#### **Bollywood actor Sanjay Dutt roped in as Brand Ambassador for 50th year Celebrations of Arunachal Pradesh.**

- The Arunachal Pradesh state Government has signed Bollywood actor Sanjay Dutt as the brand ambassador and award-winning filmmaker and branding expert Rahul Mittra as brand advisor of the

occasion of their golden jubilee celebrations, marking the 50th year of the naming of the state.

- Sanjay Dutt also launched a media campaign for the month-long celebrations, from 20th January to 20th February 2022 at the **Mechuka valley of AP's Shi-Yomi district**.
- The Chief Minister of AP Pema Khandu and State Assembly Speaker Pasang Sona Dorjee also participated in the launch.

#### Maharashtra government appoints Salman Khan as Covid vaccination ambassador

- The **Maharashtra state Government** has appointed **Veteran Bollywood Actor Salman Khan** as the Covid vaccination ambassador of the state with an intent to tackle vaccine hesitancy among the Muslim dominated areas of Maharashtra and to encourage people to get both dose of COVID vaccine.

#### 22nd Hornbill Festival celebrated in Nagaland

- The 22nd Hornbill Festival is celebrated in Nagaland at Naga Heritage Village, Kohima Organized by the State Tourism and Art & Culture Departments.
- The Governor of Assam and Nagaland **Jagdish Mukhi** inaugurated the programme of the 10-day festival.
- It is also called the 'Festival of Festivals'.
- It is the largest celebration of the Indigenous Warrior Tribes of Nagaland, generally celebrated for 10 days
- The festival is also known as **Dhanesh bird festival**.

#### Alka Upadhyaya appointed as New Chairperson of National Highways Authority of India (NHAI)

- **Alka Upadhyaya** appointed as Chairperson of National Highways Authority of India (NHAI) under Ministry of Road Transport & Highways (MoRTH) by the Government of India.
- She succeeded Giridhar Aramane
- Prior to this Alka Upadhyaya was serving as the Additional Secretary (AS), Department of Rural Development.

#### India re-elected to International Maritime Organisation Council for 2022-2023 : IMO

- India re-elected to International Maritime Organisation (IMO) Council for the year 2022-2023 biennium under category B states. There are 3 category.
- Candidates for IMO Council:
- **Category (a) 10 States** with the largest interest in providing international shipping services: China, Greece, Italy, Japan, Norway, Panama, Republic of Korea, Russian Federation, United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland, and the United States.
- **Category (b) 10 State** with the largest interest in international seaborne trade: India, Argentina, Australia, Brazil, Canada, France, Germany, Netherlands, Spain, Sweden, United Arab Emirates.
- **Category (c) 20 States:** Bahamas, Bangladesh, Belgium, Chile, Colombia, Cyprus, Denmark, Egypt,

Indonesia, Jamaica, Kenya, Kingdom of Saudi Arabia (KSA), Malaysia, Malta, Mexico, Morocco, Nigeria, Pakistan, Peru, Philippines, Poland, Qatar, Singapore, South Africa, Thailand, Turkey, Vanuatu.

### PM to inaugurate the Saryu Nahar National Project Balrampur in UP

- Prime Minister Narendra Modi will pay a visit to Balrampur, Uttar Pradesh to inaugurate the Saryu Nahar National Project.
- Prime Minister Modi's vision to prioritise long pending projects of national importance, has born results as Saryu Nahar National Project; a project in progress for four decades is now finally complete.
- Saryu Nahar National Project to benefit about 29 lakh farmers:
- This project built with a total cost of more than **Rs. 9800 crore**, wherein more than Rs 4600 crore was provisioned in the last four years. Saryu Nahar National Project involves the interlinking of five rivers, namely, Ghaghara, Saryu, Rapti, Banganga and Rohini that intends to ensure superlative usage of water resources of the region.

### GI Tag to Bihar's Mithila Makhana

- The Geographical Indications Registry (GIR) under the Central Ministry of Commerce has accepted the petition to rename Bihar Makhana as Mithila Makhana & and retained its Geographical Identification (GI) tag.
- This rename was processed by the Sabour based **Bihar Agriculture University (BAU)** initiated an application on behalf of the **Mithilanchal Makhana Utpadak Sangh (MMUS)**

### **Important GI tag of Bihar:**

- Madhubani Paintings
- Katarni Rice
- Applique (Khatwa) Work
- Sujini Embroidery Work
- Sikki Grass Products
- Bhagalpur Silk

### 7-member ALERTS Committee sets up by SEBI & headed by Madhabi Puri Buch

- The Securities and Exchange Board of India (SEBI) has set up an Advisory Committee for Leveraging Regulatory and Technology Solutions (ALERTS) consists of 7 members headed by Madhabi Puri Buch a former whole-time member of SEBI.
- This is to enhance technological capabilities and explore suitable technology solutions for the early detection of market anomalies.



### Uttar Pradesh's Jhansi Railway Station Renamed As 'Veerangana Laxmibai Railway Station'; Road Named 'Narendra Modi Marg' Inaugurated in Sikkim

- Chief Minister(CM) of Uttar Pradesh(UP) **Yogi Adityanath** has announced that the government of UP has renamed the **Jhansi Railway Station**, in Jhansi, UP as **"Veerangana Laxmibai Railway Station"** after Rani **Laxmibai**, the Maharani consort of the Maratha princely state of Jhansi.
- The notification of the renaming was issued by the Government of Uttar Pradesh following the no objection given by the Ministry of Home Affairs on 24th November 2021.

### **CURRENT AFFAIRS: INTERNATIONAL NEWS**

#### **4th Foreign Office Consultations between India and Uruguay held at Montevideo**

- The 4th Foreign Office Consultations between India and Uruguay were at Montevideo. Secretary (East), Riva Ganguly Das led the Indian delegation.
- Reviewing the ongoing bilateral cooperation, both sides identified steps to strengthen and boost trade and investment, access to pharmaceuticals products, cooperation in Information Technology sector and strengthening people-to-people ties.
- Response to Covid pandemic and access to vaccines and medicines and mutual recognition of Covid certificates were also discussed.
- They reiterated their resolve to strengthen coordination in multilateral and regional fora. External Affairs Ministry, the consultations were held in a friendly and cordial atmosphere.
- **Both sides agreed to hold** the next consultations at a mutually convenient date in New Delhi

#### **South Korea to get world's first floating city by 2025**

- South Korea to get the world's first floating city by 2025, it will be built off the coast of South Korea, and work on it will likely be completed as early as 2025.
- The project has been backed by the United Nations, and the city will be built off the coast of **Busan to deal with the problem of rising sea levels.**
- Referring to this, project leaders added that it will be a **'flood-proof infrastructure'** that will comprise several man-made islands, aiming to eliminate the risk of flooding by rising with the sea.
- The floating city will be a self-sufficient city, which is a joint effort by the **UN Human Settlement Programme (UN-Habit)** and **OCEANIX.**
- The city will be able to generate its own electricity from solar panels, ferry tourists and inhabitants between the island on specially-made boats, and produce its own food and fresh water.

#### **Global trade likely to hit \$28 trillion in 2021, grow 23% YoY: UNCTAD report**

- Global trade is expected to reach about **\$28 trillion in 2021**, growing 11 per cent over pre-pandemic levels, according to the global trade update **report issued by UNCTAD**.
- The outlook for 2022, however, remains very uncertain, due to slowing economic recovery, disruptions of logistics and rise in shipping costs, global semiconductor shortage, regionalization of trade flows, debt burden and governmental policies affecting international trade
- India's trade growth accelerated in Q3 CY2021 — both in goods and services — while that **of China remained relatively constant although at already high levels**
- In 2021, the value of global trade in goods and services is expected to increase by about \$5.2 trillion relative to 2020, and by about \$2.8 trillion relative to 2019, the equivalent of **an increase of about 23 per cent and 11 per cent, respectively**.
- Global trade growth stabilised during the second half of 2021, increasing by about 1 per cent quarter-over-quarter.

#### India joins G20 'Troika' with Indonesia and Italy

- **India has joined the G20 Troika**, apart from India, Troika consists of Indonesia and Italy.
- External Affairs Ministry, India will assume the G20 Presidency **in December 2022 from Indonesia** and will convene the G20 Leaders' **Summit for the first time in the country in 2023**.
- India will work closely with Indonesia and Italy to ensure consistency and continuity of the G20's agenda as a Troika member.
- **Indonesia has assumed the G20 Presidency** and will convene various G20 meetings throughout the year culminating with the G20 Leaders' Summit in October next year under the overall theme of Recover Together Recover Stronger.
- The G20 is a premier forum for international economic cooperation. As a founding member of the G20, India has used the platform to raise issues of vital importance.

#### 11th edition of Exercise ECUVERIN between India and Maldives to be conducted at Kadhdhoo Island:

- The 11th edition of Exercise ECUVERIN between India and Maldives will be conducted at Kadhdhoo Island, Maldives.
- The exercise will enhance synergy and inter-operability between the Armed Forces of both nations in terms of understanding transnational terrorism both on land and at sea, conducting Counter-Terrorism and Counter-Insurgency Operations and sharing best military practices and experiences.
- Besides rigorous training, the joint military exercise will also include cultural and sports activities to enhance defence cooperation and bilateral relations.
- the exercise will go a long way in strengthening India's relations with the Maldives amidst emerging

security dynamics in the Indian Ocean Region.

#### World Cooperative Monitor report 2021- IFFCO Topped:

- The Indian Farmers Fertiliser Cooperative Limited (IFFCO) has been ranked 'number one Cooperative' among the top 300 cooperatives in the globe.
- The ranking is based on the ratio of turnover over the gross domestic product (GDP) per capita.
- It signifies that IFFCO is contributing significantly to the GDP and economic growth of the nation.
- The 2021 edition of the 10th Annual World Cooperative Monitor (WCM) report, withholding its position from the 2020 edition.
- The 2021 WCM report is published by the International Cooperative Alliance (ICA) and European Research Institute on Cooperative and Social Enterprises.

#### Bangladesh-India partnership has taken a dynamic, comprehensive and strategic shape

- Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina of Bangladesh has called for recommitting the two countries towards further strengthening the long-standing dynamic partnership between Bangladesh and India.
- At the event has organised by the **Indian Council of World Affairs (ICWA) in Delhi** on the occasion of Maitri Diwas, Prime Minister Hasina, the golden jubilee of establishment of diplomatic relations between the two countries is a milestone in the **journey of bilateral relation between Bangladesh and India.**
- It is not confined to the treaties, MoUs, bilateral agreements that provide the formal structure to the working relations between Bangladesh and India.
- This relationship has matured taking dynamic, comprehensive and strategic shape and is based on sovereignty, equality, trust and mutual respect.

#### NASA selects Indian-origin physician Anil Menon as one of astronauts for future missions

- **Indian-origin physician Anil Menon has been selected by NASA** along with nine others to be astronauts for future missions, the American space agency has announced.
- 45 years old Menon, a lieutenant **colonel at the US Air Force, was SpaceX's first flight surgeon**, helping to launch the company's first humans to space during Nasa's SpaceX Demo-2 mission.
- Nasa announced that it has chosen 10 new astronaut candidates from a field of more than 12,000 applicants to represent the US and work for humanity's benefit in space.
- Menon previously served Nasa as the crew flight surgeon for various expeditions taking astronauts to the International Space Station.
- **Earlier, aeronautical engineer Sirisha Bandla** in July became the third Indian-origin woman to fly into space after Kalpana Chawla and Sunita Williams.
- Till now, **Wing Commander Rakesh Sharma** is the only Indian citizen to travel in space.

- The former Indian Air Force pilot flew aboard Soyuz T-11 on April 3, 1984, part of the **Soviet Interkosmos** programme.

#### India-Japan Science and Technology Seminar highlights need to evolve to bigger missions

- India and Japan to evolve to bigger missions between the two countries for addressing the demands of the entire planet and the region, at the India-Japan Science and Technology Seminar
- Focusing on handling of data, machine learning, and artificial intelligence, S&T has a very important role to play to address ever emerging global challenges as we go forward and the cooperation between India and Japan need to scale up based on the cooperation.
- Prof K Vijay Raghavan pointed out while delivering the keynote addresses at the seminar **titled Nobel Laureate S&T Seminar Series -India-Japan Science and Technology Seminar**
- The two-day seminar was jointly organized in hybrid mode by the Sree Chitra Tirunal Institute for Medical Sciences & Technology, **an autonomous institution of the Department of Science and Technology (DST), Govt. of India, and Indian JSPS Alumni Association (IJAA)** to commemorate the 70th anniversary of India Japan diplomatic relations and the 75th anniversary of Indian Independence --Azadi ka Amrit Mahotsav.

#### 8th Foreign Office Consultations between India, Slovenia held virtually:

- **The 8th Foreign Office Consultations between India and Slovenia** were held virtually.
- Secretary (West) in the **External Affairs Ministry, Reenat Sandhu** and State Secretary of Slovenian Foreign Affairs Ministry, Dr. Stanislav Rascan reviewed India - Slovenia bilateral relations.
- **Regional and global issues** of mutual interest were also discussed.

#### India and the UAE to wrap up the Comprehensive Economic Partnership Agreement (CEPA) by next month:

- The Union Minister of Commerce & Industry, Consumer Affairs & Food & Public Distribution and Textiles, Shri Piyush Goyal had, India and the UAE will wrap up the Comprehensive Economic Partnership Agreement (CEPA) by next month.
- “Hopefully by the end of this month or next month, we hope to conclude them (the negotiations) so that this would probably be one of the fastest trade agreements between two countries ever made,” **addressing the India Global Forum, UAE-2021 through video conference.**
- The agreement will be a mutually beneficial win-win solution for both countries, “provide market access to each other. Some of the elements of the agreement are the first of its kind, particularly for both countries.”
- This year Indian economy has been able to “largely recover” **from what it had contracted last year due to the “very severe lockdown”** we had imposed to tackle the Covid.
- “We have been able to look at very attractive growth rates, - Second quarter, that’s July-Sep, we grew at 8.4% which is one of the fastest growing growth rates in the world.

- Our investments are at an all-time high, we are getting some of **the highest FDI or FPI** in recent months. Indian businesses are showing more compliant growth, more profitability growth.
- In the last few months our exports have been at an all-time high, - both merchandise and in services.

#### AIM NITI Aayog, & Embassy of Denmark launches 2nd edition of water innovation challenges to address global water woes:

- Atal Innovation Mission, NITI Aayog and the Royal Embassy of Denmark to India announced the second edition of water innovation challenges here to address the global water woes through innovations as part of the Indo-Danish Bilateral Green Strategic partnership.
- Doubling down on the efforts to scale up innovations in the water sector, the AIM-ICDK water challenge is being rolled out under the year-old ambitious partnership of AIM, NITI Aayog and Innovation Center Denmark (ICDK) under the aegis of Denmark Embassy in India, and the Denmark Technical University (DTU).
- The initiative aims to identify innovative & next-gen solutions to solve proposed challenges in collaboration with corporate and public partners.
- The initiative will engage young talents from leading universities and innovation hubs across the nation to build their skills and apply their technical disciplines and innovation capacity.
- The winners of the challenges will also represent India at the International Water Congress 2022.
- The Denmark Embassy in India, and the DTU will be preparing the Indian participants for the Global Next Generation Water Action (NGWA) program to be hosted by DTU.
- The applications are live now and participants can apply through the link <https://aimapp2.aim.gov.in/icdk2021/login.php> also given on the AIM, NITI Aayog's official website.
- The participants will receive awards in different categories and will be able to network with innovators across the globe.

#### India co-chairs Global Methane Initiative Steering Leadership Meeting:

- **A Steering Leadership meeting of Global Methane Initiative (GMI)** has been held virtually in which the Additional Secretary, Ministry of Coal, **V.K. Tiwari as the Vice Chairman** of this global initiative informed the participants about the work being carried out by India to mitigate the emission of methane.
- Emission of methane is a big concern as it is a greenhouse gas having 25-28 times harmful effect than carbon dioxide
- **Global Methane Initiative (GMI)** is a voluntary Government and an informal international partnership having members from **45 countries including the United States and Canada.**

- The forum has been created to achieve global reduction in anthropogenic methane emission through partnership among developed and developing countries having economies in transition.
- **The forum was created in 2004** and India is one of the members since its inception and has taken up Vice-Chairmanship for the **first time in the Steering Leadership along with USA.**
- The Chairperson of the Steering Leadership is from Canada.
- Several decisions including holding of next round of meeting in near future were taken.
- Both Canada and the US appreciated the actions taken by India in reducing and harnessing methane gas

#### UNICEF launches Passport to Earning platform for young people:

- Accenture, Dubai Cares, Microsoft and UNICEF has announced the launch of a global, digital learning platform for young people.
- Operating under the Generation Unlimited partnership, the Passport to Earning platform **aims to address the global education crisis** – currently exacerbated by the COVID-19 pandemic – and prepare the next generation for decent work.
- The platform will provide young people aged 15-24 across the world with free, certified education and skills training—with content spanning across digital, foundational, role-based, and technical skills.
- According to a recent World Bank-UNESCO-UNICEF report, the current generation of student's risks losing \$17 trillion in lifetime earnings around 14 per cent of today's global GDP as a result of COVID-19 pandemic-related school closures.
- However, even before the pandemic, young people were not learning the skills necessary for future work.
- Pre-pandemic data showed that without immediate action, **by 2030 an estimated 825 million children will not acquire the basic secondary-level skills** such as transferable, digital and job-specific skills needed to support lifelong learning and employment.

#### South Korea and Australia sign major defence deal:

- Australia and South Korea signed a \$720 million defence deal as South Korean President Moon Jae-in became the first foreign leader to visit Australia since the pandemic began.
- Worth about **\$1 billion in Australian dollars**, the deal will see South Korean defence company Hanwha provide the Australian army with artillery weapons, supply vehicles and radars.
- The defence contract is the largest struck between Australia and an Asian nation, and comes at a time of heightened tensions between Australia and China.
- Australia recently announced a deal to build nuclear-powered submarines in a partnership with the US and Britain — a move that China has strongly condemned.
- Moon also confirmed **South Korea isn't considering joining the US-led diplomatic boycott of the Beijing**



**Winter Olympics**, and said North Korea was holding up efforts to declare a formal end to the 1950-53 Korean War.

#### **PRESIDENT OF INDIA IN BANGLADESH; ATTENDS BILATERAL MEETINGS:**

- The President of India, Shri Ram Nath Kovind, landed at the Hazrat Shahjalal International Airport in Dhaka where he was received by Mr Mohammad Abdul Hamid, the President of Bangladesh himself.
- President Kovind is on a three-day state visit to Bangladesh from December 15 to 17, 2021, which is his first state visit since the outbreak of the COVID pandemic.
- The President was accorded a ceremonial welcome and given Guard of Honour at the Airport.
- Thereafter, he visited the **National Martyrs' Memorial in Savar** and paid tributes to the martyrs of the Liberation War of Bangladesh.
- Subsequently, he visited Bangabandhu Memorial Museum at 32 Dhanmondi where he paid homage to **Bangabandhu Sheikh Mujibur Rahman, the Father of the nation of Bangladesh.**
- In these meetings, the President congratulated the government and people of Bangladesh on the historic occasion of Mujib Borsho, 50th anniversary of liberation of Bangladesh and 50 years of India-Bangladesh bilateral relations.
- **The Liberation War of Bangladesh** was an inspiring episode in recent history and India was honored to be the part of it.

#### **UNESCO inscribes 'Durga Puja in Kolkata' on the Representative List of Intangible Cultural Heritage of Humanity:**

- In an important announcement, the Intergovernmental Committee of UNESCO's 2003 Convention on Safeguarding of the Intangible Cultural Heritage has inscribed 'Durga Puja in Kolkata' on the Representative List of Intangible Cultural Heritage of Humanity during its 16th session being held at Paris, France from 13th to 18th December 2021.
- The Committee commended Durga Puja for its initiatives to involve marginalized groups, and individuals as well as women in their participation in safeguarding the element.
- The union minister for Culture, Tourism and DONER, in a tweet said that this is a recognition of the confluence of **our rich heritage, culture, rituals and practices and a celebration of the feminine divinity** and the spirit of womanhood.
- Durga Puja not only is a celebration of the feminine divinity but is a consummate expression of dance, music, crafts, rituals, practices culinary and cultural aspects.
- The festival transcends the boundaries of caste, creed and economic classes and joins the people together in its celebration.
- With the inscription of **Durga Puja in Kolkata, India** now has 14 intangible cultural heritage elements on the

prestigious UNESCO Representative List of ICH of Humanity.

- In recent years, the ICH elements that saw inscriptions are Kumbh Mela (inscribed 2017), Yoga (inscribed 2016) among others.
- India is a signatory of the 2003 UNESCO Convention which aims for the Safeguarding of the Intangible of the Intangible Heritage along with traditions and living expression.

#### ISRO signed six agreements with four countries for launching foreign satellites during 2021-2023

- Union Minister of State (Independent Charge) Science & Technology; Minister of State (Independent Charge) Earth Sciences; MoS PMO, Personnel, Public Grievances, Pensions, Atomic Energy and Space, Dr Jitendra Singh, **ISRO has signed six agreements with four countries for launching foreign satellites during 2021-2023.**
- Dr. Jitendra Singh informed that **about 132 million Euros would be earned** through launching of these foreign satellites on a commercial basis.
- Indian Space Research Organisation (ISRO) through its commercial arm, **New Space India Limited (NSIL), a Govt. of India company under Department of Space (DOS)**, has been launching satellites belonging to other countries on-board Polar Satellite Launch Vehicle (PSLV), on a commercial basis.
- NSIL as on date has signed six Launch Service Agreements with customers from four countries for launching foreign satellites into **space on-board PSLV during 2021-2023.**
- A total number of 124 indigenous satellites have been put into Earth's orbit including 12 student satellites.

#### Bilateral meeting to be held between India and Vietnam to strengthen collaboration in Telecommunications and Postal Sector

- A Bilateral meeting is scheduled to be held between the Ministry of Communications, Government of India and the Ministry of Information and Communications, **Socialist Republic of Vietnam in Sanchar Bhawan, New Delhi to strengthen collaboration in the Telecommunications and Postal Sector.**
- The Indian side will be headed by Minister of State for Communications, Shri Devusinh Chauhan while the Vietnamese delegation will be led by, HE **Mr. Nguyen Manh Hung, Minister of Information and Communications, Viet Nam.**
- In line with the comprehensive strategic and economic partnership and growing relations between the Republic of India and Socialist Republic of Vietnam, Ministers of the two countries will be signing a **"Letter of Intent" for enhanced cooperation in the Postal Sector.**
- Russian President Putin affirms to attend the 2022 Winter Olympics in Beijing
- Russian president Vladimir Putin has pledged to attend the 2022 Winter Olympics in Beijing.
- He became the first major western leader to indicate his attendance.

- His remarks came in a video call with Chinese President Xi Jinping, he looked forward to a get-together.
- It comes as a growing number of countries have joined a diplomatic boycott of the Games.
- This is due to alleged human rights abuses in China, which Beijing denies.
- **The US, UK, Australia and Canada** have said their high-level officials **will not be attending the winter Games**, which will take place in February, as a result.
- However, athletes from these countries will still be in attendance. Japan's Prime Minister Fumio Kishida also added that he had no plans to attend the Games at the moment.

#### World's Most Admired Men 2021: PM Modi bags 8th spot

- Prime Minister **Narendra Modi** has ranked **8th** on the list of the **world's top 20 most admired men**, in a survey carried out by data analytics company **YouGov**.
- The list has been compiled taking **feedback** from **42,000 people** in **38 countries**.

#### List of Top 20 Most Admired Men 2021:

1. Barack Obama
2. Bill Gates
3. Xi Jinping
4. Cristiano Ronaldo
5. Jackie Chan
6. Elon Musk
7. Lionel Messi
8. Narendra Modi
9. Vladimir Putin
10. Jack Ma
11. Warren Buffett
12. Sachin Tendulkar
13. Donald Trump
14. Shahrukh Khan
15. Amitabh Bachchan
16. Pope Francis
17. Imran Khan
18. Virat Kohli
19. Andy Lau
20. Joe Biden

#### List of Top 20 Most Admired Women 2021:

1. Michelle Obama
2. Angelina Jolie
3. Queen Elizabeth II
4. Oprah Winfrey
5. Scarlett Johansson
6. Emma Watson
7. Taylor Swift
8. Angela Merkel
9. Malala Yousafzai
10. Priyanka Chopra
11. Kamala Harris
12. Hillary Clinton
13. Aishwarya Rai Bachchan
14. Sudha Murty
15. Greta Thunberg
16. Melania Trump
17. Lisa
18. Liu Yifei
19. Yang Mi
20. Jacinda Ardern

Earlier 2021, Prime Minister Narendra Modi had also secured the top spot (a score of 70 percent on the survey) on the 'Global Leader Approval Tracker' list put out by American research firm Morning Consult.

#### India to chair Counter Terrorism Committee of UNSC in January 2022 after ten years:

- India will chair the Counter-Terrorism Committee of UNSC in January 2022 after 10 years.
- The Counter-Terrorism Committee was **established by Security Council resolution 1373** adopted unanimously on 28 September 2001 in the wake of the 9/11 terror attacks in the US.
- The Committee was tasked with monitoring implementation of resolution 1373 which requested countries to implement a number of **measures aimed at enhancing their legal and institutional ability** to counter terrorist activities at home and around the world.
- This includes taking steps to criminalize the financing of terrorism, freezing any funds related to persons involved in acts of terrorism, deny all forms of financial support for terrorist groups, suppress the provision

of safe haven, sustenance or support for terrorists and share information with other governments on any groups practicing or planning terrorist acts.

- Besides, the Committee monitors steps taken to cooperate with other **governments in the investigation, detection, arrest, extradition and prosecution** of those involved in terror acts and criminalizes active and passive assistance for terrorism.

#### AI Prosecutor: China's recent AI project:

- As artificial intelligence (AI) technology gathers momentum worldwide, reports claim China has developed an AI "prosecutor" which can charge people using the high-end technology.
- According to Chinese researchers, the AI "prosecutor" can file charges against an accused with over 97 per cent accuracy based on verbal description.
- Researchers in China have developed a machine which can charge people with crimes by using artificial intelligence. **This is world's first developed.**
- The AI prosecutor have the capability to file a charge with more than 97 percent accuracy. It will file a charge on the basis of verbal description of the case.
- It was built and tested by **Shanghai Pudong People's Procuratorate**, which is China's largest and busiest district prosecution office
- It could run on a desktop computer. For each suspect, the prosecutor would press a charge based on 1,000 traits, which are obtained from human-generated case description text.
- In between 2015 to 2020, the machine was "trained" using more than 17,000 cases.

#### India welcomes Egypt as 4th member of BRICS New Development Bank:

- India has welcomed Egypt as the fourth new member of BRICS New Development Bank.
- The External Affairs Ministry ,Arindam Bagchi, Bangladesh, UAE, and Uruguay joined in September this year.
- Mr. Bagchi, membership expansion enables New Development Bank to position itself as a premier development institution for emerging economies.
- The New Development Bank aims to mobilize resources for development projects in BRICS, **emerging economies, and developing countries.**

#### Somalia's President suspends PM Mohamed Hussein Roble:

- Somalia's President Mohamed Abdullahi Farmajo has suspended the Prime Minister, Mohamed Hussein Roble who is facing allegations of involvement in the theft of land.
- Mr Farmajo stated , suspension of the Prime Minister pending the outcome of an investigation into the corruption allegations.

- Mohamed Roble accused the President of trying to stage a coup and said he would continue in office.
- He urged the security forces to take orders from him rather than Mr Farmajo.

### Magdalena Andersson Elected As Sweden's First Woman Prime Minister in her 2nd election from Social

#### Democratic Party (SDP)

- Eva Magdalena Andersson was first elected as the PM but later resigned after her coalition partner (Green Party) quit the government and the budget failed to pass.
- Later on in her 2nd election she once again Elected As Sweden's First Woman Prime Minister and made record.
- She is the former Finance Minister of Sweden.

### Japanese Film Director Naomi Kawase appointed as UNESCO Goodwill Ambassador for Cultural and Creative Industries

- **UNESCO** (United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization) Director-General Audrey Azoulay named Japanese film director **Naomi Kawase** as the **UNESCO Goodwill Ambassador for Cultural and Creative Industries**.
- She has been recognised for her commitment to culture and creativity at the service of the development of more just societies, especially for girls and women, and her support for the objectives of UNESCO.

### Adama Barrow sworn in as Gambia's President

- The President of Gambia, Adama Barrow wins second term as President
- In Gambia's presidential election he achieved over **53% votes**.
- He defeated his main challenger **Ousainou Darboe**.

### 1<sup>st</sup> government to turn 100% paperless - Dubai

- Dubai became the world's first government to become 100% paperless, the announcement was made by the United Arab Emirate (UAE) Crown Prince, Sheikh Hamdan bin Mohammed bin Rashid Al Maktoum.
- As per the report this will save around 3 billion Dirham (USD 350 million) and 14-million-man hours.
- All the exceptional digital services can be accessed by the Citizens through the '**Dubai Now app**'.

## **CURRENT AFFAIRS: STATE NEWS**

### Asian Paints signed MoU with Gujarat government

- Asian Paints has signed a Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) with the Government of Gujarat, commencing the proposed expansion of manufacturing capacity at its Ankleshwar facility at a total investment of about ₹960 crore at the current prices.
- The company, in an exchange filing, said the manufacturing capacity of paint will go up **from 130,000 KL to 250,000 KL, and resins and emulsions from 32,000 MT to 85,000 MT**.



- The capacity expansion will be completed over a period of the next 2-3 years.
- The company, expansion will be carried out on the existing land owned by the company.

#### Nagaland police launches 'Call your Cop' mobile App for citizens

- Nagaland DGP T. John Longkumer officially launched the 'Call your Cop' mobile App at Police Headquarters in Kohima.
- DGP Longkumer, the App will enable all citizens of the state especially those in distress to get in touch directly with the police as easily available with just one click away.
- IT, internet, and mobile is pervasive which cannot be avoided, and sometimes it is used for criminal activities and wrongdoings.
- This initiative is also in keeping with the total modernization of the police department not only in Nagaland but all over the country.
- The development of this App is one of the most important initiatives of the Nagaland Police with the aim to bring the police and public closer.
- The features in the App include directory, alerts, tourist tips, SOS, nearest police station and search.
- Citizens can download the app from google store on any android phone. One can download the app from the google store.

#### Chennai-headquartered ICT Academy partners with UiPath

- **The Chennai-headquartered ICT Academy**, an initiative of the Government of India in collaboration with the State governments and industries, **has partnered with UiPath**, an enterprise automation software company, to take the UiPath Academic Alliance programme to over **1,000 ICT Academy partner institutions across India**.
- Robotic Process Automation (RPA) and automation skills have become an integral component for the future of work.
- This partnership aims to drive automation literacy among teachers, administrative staff, and the students of partner institutions
- According to a recent Deloitte survey, **78 per cent of organisations** are already implementing RPA, while Gartner predicts 90 per cent of large organisations globally will have adopted some form of RPA **by 2022**.

#### Himanta Biswa Sarma launches Assam MicroFinance Incentive and Relief Scheme 2021

- Chief Minister Himanta Biswa Sarma inaugurated the ambitious Assam Micro Finance Incentive and Relief Scheme-2021 at Collegiate High School playground in Tezpur in Sonitpur district, Assam.
- He ceremonially distributed cheques to **five women beneficiaries** during the programme.
- The scheme would **benefit 24 lakh women** in the state, while 59,468 women would receive reliefs

amounting to **Rs 16,000-Rs 25,000** in the Sonitpur district.

- The Chief Minister inaugurated the first phase of the scheme for those borrowers who have been repaying microfinance and bank loans regularly.
- They will get a one-time incentive up to Rs 25,000 or an outstanding balance, whichever is less.
- In the second phase, relief will go to borrowers whose payments are overdue by 1-89 days, and overdue accounts, but not NPA.
- The State Government will pay the overdue amounts. In the third phase, the scheme will cover the borrowers who are stressed, destitute and whose accounts have become NPAs.
- The government will consider providing partial or full relief based on the evaluation.
- Earlier, the Chief Minister inaugurated a 30-bed Paediatric ICU (PICU), a 30-bed ICU and 24 residential quarters for the professors at Tezpur Medical College and Hospital. There are 15 ICU beds and 15 step-down beds at the paediatric ICU. Set up with an investment of Rs. 4.45 crore, the PICU is expected to fulfil the requirements of child treatment to a great extent.

#### Union Ministry of Electronics & IT, Govt of Andhra Pradesh and NASSCOM launch 'Centre of Excellence of IoT and AI' in Visakhapatnam

- National Association of Software and Services Companies (NASSCOM), in a joint partnership with the Ministry of Electronics and Information Technology (MeitY) and Government of Andhra Pradesh, has inaugurated the 'Centre of Excellence on IoT and AI' at Andhra University Campus, Visakhapatnam, aimed at promoting innovation in emerging technologies of IoT, AI, robotics, etc.
- The new centre advances Prime Minister Shri Modi's Digital India vision by providing open labs and infrastructure to create and **validate solutions from design to prototype to democratise innovation**.
- It also promotes entrepreneurship by providing an incubation facility for peer-to-peer learning and the benefit of an industrial environment.
- The **Centre of Excellence of IoT and AI** is a step towards solving real-world challenges and creating an impact.
- It is designed to be a catalyst that will help the industry embrace technology and become globally competitive.
- The centre will focus on harnessing the power of Artificial intelligence and the Internet of things to bring unprecedented opportunities for Industry, Start-ups, and Academia.

#### Drinking water supply schemes worth Rs. 1,816 Crore approved for Rajasthan

- Drinking water supply schemes worth Rs 1,816 Crore were approved for Rajasthan in the State-level Scheme Sanctioning Committee (SLSSC) meeting held.

- These schemes will provide tap water connection in 2,348 villages spread over 20 districts of the State. It will provide tap water connections to over **3.8 lakh rural households**.
- While approving proposals, the SLSSC has given special attention on water quality issues in 16 districts impacted with geo-genic contamination, thereby urging to make provision of tap water supply in these areas on priority.
- The State was urged to consider use of solar -power based schemes. To ensure sustainability of ground water sources in the State, work on community tankas is being undertaken by the water supply department.
- Under Jal Jeevan Mission (JJM), there is provision for constitution of State Level Scheme Sanctioning Committee (SLSSC) for consideration and approval of schemes to be taken up for provisioning tap water supply to rural households.
- The SLSSC acts as a State-level Committee to consider water supply schemes/ projects, and **a nominee of the National Jal Jeevan Mission (NJJM)**

#### PM to inaugurate and lay foundation stone of multiple projects worth around Rs 18,000 crore in Dehradun

- Prime Minister Shri Narendra Modi will visit Dehradun and inaugurate & lay **the foundation stone of multiple projects worth around Rs 18,000 crore**
- A significant focus of the visit will be on projects to improve road infrastructure, which will make travel smooth and safer, and also increase tourism in the region.
- This is in line with the vision of the Prime Minister to boost connectivity in the areas which were once considered far-flung.
- Prime Minister will lay the foundation stone of eleven development projects. This includes the Delhi-Dehradun Economic Corridor (from Eastern Peripheral Expressway Junction to Dehradun) which will be built at a cost of around Rs 8300 crore.
- The greenfield alignment project from Delhi-Dehradun Economic Corridor, connecting Halgoa, Saharanpur to Bhadrabad, **Haridwar will be constructed at a cost of over Rs 2000 crore.**
- It will provide seamless connectivity and reduce travel time from Delhi to Haridwar as well.
- Prime Minister will also inaugurate seven projects, including those which focus on making travel safer by tackling the problem of chronic landslides in the region.

#### 2-day Regional Conference on 'Replication of Good Governance Practices' to be held in Bhubaneswar

- The Department of Administrative Reforms and Public Grievances (DARPG) in collaboration with Government of Odisha is organizing a Regional Conference on the theme: "Replication of Good

Governance Practices," at Bhubaneswar in a semi-virtual mode.

- The main objective of the Conference is to **bring national and state level public administration organizations on the same platform** to share experiences and innovations in public administration, transforming future public solution for improving quality of life, e-Governance and Digital Governance.
- The Conference is a two-days event in which representatives/ DM/DC of States are invited to make presentation on good governance practices of the States for wider dissemination.
- This Conference is an effort to create a common platform to share experiences in the formulation and implementation of best practices which has led to better public service delivery and benefit to the citizens. Delegates from **14 States of North-Eastern and Eastern Region of India** (Arunachal Pradesh, Assam, Meghalaya, Manipur, Sikkim, Nagaland, Mizoram, Tripura, Jharkhand, Bihar, West Bengal, Chhattisgarh and Andhra Pradesh including Odisha) will participate in the Conference in a semi-virtual mode.

#### **Nagaland celebrates 59th Statehood Day**

- Nagaland observed the 59th Statehood Day at the Nagaland Civil Secretariat Plaza in Kohima on 1st December 2021.

#### **Significance of the day:**

- To remember the struggle and sacrifice of Naga leaders who contributed in the formation of **Nagaland** as the **16th state of India**.
- In 1957, The agreement was signed between Naga leaders and the central government to make a separate region of the Naga Hills.
- The Parliament enacted Nagaland statehood under the State of **Nagaland Act, 1962**.
- The Chief Minister also launched the National Initiative for Proficiency in Reading with Understanding and Numeracy (NIPUN Bharat) Mission in the state which aims that every child has learn reading, writing, and numeracy.

#### **Sarbananda Sonowal has announced AYUSH Development packages for Manipur:**

- Union Minister of Ports, Shipping & Waterways and AYUSH Sarbananda Sonowal has announced AYUSH Development packages for Manipur.
- The Ministry of AYUSH has decided to construct fifteen AYUSH Dispensaries, seven 10 bedded hospitals and fifty Health and Wellness Centres in Manipur.
- Manipur is resourceful in medicinal plants and the AYUSH ministry has decided to develop sixteen nurseries in every district of the State and another hundred schools of herbal gardens.
- Sonowal appealed to Chief Minister of Manipur N. Biren Singh and his cabinet colleagues to implement these AYUSH Schemes in a specific time frame and assured that his Ministry is ready to extend all

possible support to the Manipur Government in the future.

- Mr Sonowal also inaugurated a **fifty-bed Integrated AYUSH Hospital** constructed at Moreh, the border town of Manipur through video conferencing.
- Manipur Chief Minister N. Biren Singh, Union Minister of State for Education and External Affairs Dr. R K Ranjan and others **attended the inaugural program**. Mr Sonowal reached Imphal yesterday on a two-day visit to Manipur.

#### Himachal Pradesh becomes first state in country to vaccinate its entire eligible population:

- Himachal Pradesh government will organize a mega event at AIIMS Bilaspur to mark the achievement of hundred percent COVID vaccination of second dose for its eligible population.
- On this occasion, the Union Health Minister will felicitate the health workers of the state who have played significant role in completing the entire vaccination campaign in the state.
- BJP National President Jagat Prakash Nadda will also inaugurate OPD at AIIMS Bilaspur.
- LED screens have been installed at prominent places across the state to watch the live telecast of the function.
- Union Health minister will also review the progress of **AIIMS Bilaspur**.
- It may be recalled that the state had become a champion in meeting the 100 percent target of the first dose across the country and now has achieved the 100 percent target of the second dose of covid vaccination and became the first state which fully vaccinated against covid 19.

#### Central grant of Rs. 1,667 Crore released to Maharashtra under Jal Jeevan Mission:

- Union Government led by Prime Minister Shri Narendra Modi accords top priority to make provision of tap water connection in every rural household across the country.
- With a focus to expedite the implementation of Jal Jeevan Mission in Maharashtra, the Government of India released 1,666.64 Crore to the State.
- Central fund of ₹7,064.41 Crore has been allocated to the State for 2021-22 for the implementation of Jal Jeevan Mission, which is nearly four times the allocation for 2020-21.
- There are 142.36 lakh rural households in the State, out of which 96.46 lakh households (67.76%) have tap water connection. In 2021-22, the State plans to provide tap water connections to 27.45 lakh households.
- Top priority is accorded by the Union Government to Jal Jeevan Mission as evidenced by the massive increase in budgetary allocation to Rs. 92,309 Crore in 2021-22, from Rs. 23,022 Crore in the preceding year.
- Further in 2021-22, Rs 2,584 Crore is allocated to Maharashtra as 15th Finance Commission grant for

water & sanitation to Rural Local Bodies/ PRIs and there is an assured funding of Rs 13,628 Crore for the next five years i.e. up to 2025-26 to the rural local bodies.

#### **KVIC Rolls Out Project RE-HAB in Assam to Prevent Elephant – Human Conflicts Using Tiny Bees:**

- Buoyed by the success of its innovative Project RE-HAB (Reducing Elephant-Human Attacks using Bees) in Karnataka, Khadi and Village Industries Commission (KVIC) has now replicated the project in Assam.
- Chairman KVIC, **Shri Vinai Kumar Saxena** launched Project RE-HAB at Village Mornoi in Goalpara district of Assam which severely grapples with elephant-human conflicts.
- The project has been implemented in **Assam** with the support of the local **forest department**. Surrounded by dense forests, a large part of **Assam** is infested by **elephants with 332 human deaths reported between 2014 and 2019 due to elephant attacks**.
- Under Project RE-HAB, “Bee-fences” are created by setting up bee boxes in the passage ways of elephants to block their entrance to human territories.
- The boxes are connected with a string so that when elephants attempt to pass through, a tug or pull causes the bees to swarm the elephant herds and dissuade them from progressing further.
- It is **a cost-effective way of reducing human-wild conflicts** without causing any harm to the animals. It is scientifically recorded that elephants are annoyed by the honey bees.
- Elephants also fear that the bee swarms can bite their sensitive inner side of the trunk and eyes. The collective buzz of the bees is annoying to elephants that force them to return.

#### **Drinking water supply schemes of Rs. 267.66 Crore approved under Jal Jeevan Mission in Uttarakhand:**

- Drinking water supply schemes of Rs 267.66 Crore were approved under Jal Jeevan Mission in Uttarakhand in the State-level scheme sanctioning committee (SLSSC) meeting held on 2nd December, 2021.
- All 13 water supply schemes sanctioned are multi-village schemes. It will provide tap water connection to more **than 23,000 rural households**.
- Thus, in the past one week drinking water supply scheme worth Rs 492.90 Crore for 681 villages spread across 9 districts benefitting 42,000 households have been approved for Uttarakhand.
- As on date, out of 15.18 lakh rural household in the State, 7.43 lakh (49%) are getting tap water supply in their homes. In 2021-22, the State plans to provide tap water connections to 2.64 lakh household.
- Uttarakhand plans to provide tap water connections to 15.18 lakh rural households by 2022. Rs. 1,443.80 Crore central allocation to Uttarakhand under Jal Jeevan Mission for 2020-21.
- Rs. 256 Crore have been allocated to **Uttarakhand as 15th Finance Commission tied grant for water & sanitation to Rural Local Bodies/ PRIs in 2021-22**. There is assured funding of Rs. 1,344 Crore tied grant



for the next five years i.e. up to 2025-26.

#### India, ADB sign \$125 million loan to improve water supply and sanitation in Uttarakhand

- The Government of India and the Asian Development Bank (ADB) has signed a \$125 million loan to improve access to safe and affordable drinking water supply and citywide inclusive sanitation services in Dehradun and Nainital cities in the state of Uttarakhand.
- Mr. Rajat Kumar Mishra, Additional Secretary, Department of Economic Affairs, Ministry of Finance, signed for the Government of India the agreement for the **Uttarakhand Integrated and Resilient Urban Development Project** while Mr Takeo Konishi, Country Director of ADB's India Resident Mission, signed for ADB.
- The project will construct 136 kilometers (km) of water pipe system to replace defective water networks in South Dehradun to ensure reliable and continuous water supply to benefit an estimated 40,000 people, including 4,000 urban poor and vulnerable groups.
- Water meters will also be installed in about 5,400 households to support efficient water use and consumption billing.
- In addition, the project will establish sewage treatment plants in Dehradun, supported by 256 km of enclosed underground **sewer networks** and 117 km of **storm water drainage networks** benefiting an estimated 138,000 residents, including 15,000 urban poor and vulnerable people
- ADB will provide a \$250,000 technical assistance (TA) grant from its Technical Assistance Special Fund and another \$750,000 grant from its Climate Change Fund to further strengthen climate-resilient urban planning and development of the state by carrying out a thorough assessment, supporting science-based decision making, developing smart climate resilient urban planning tools, and capacity-building activities.

#### India, ADB sign \$150 million loan to provide affordable housing for urban poor in Tamil Nadu

- **The Government of India and Asian Development Bank (ADB) has signed a \$150 million loan to provide access to inclusive, resilient, and sustainable housing for the urban poor in the state of Tamil Nadu.**
- The signatories to the loan agreement for Inclusive, Resilient and Sustainable Housing for Urban Poor Sector Project in Tamil Nadu were Shri Rajat Kumar Mishra, Additional Secretary, Department of Economic Affairs, Ministry of Finance, **signed for the Government of India, and Mr. Takeo Konishi, Country Director of ADB's India Resident Mission, who signed for the ADB.**
- Through **the Tamil Nadu Urban Habitat Development Board**, the project will construct housing units in nine different locations and relocate about 6,000 households vulnerable to natural hazards to safer locations.
- It will also help Tamil Nadu's Directorate of Town and Country Planning develop regional plans to map the state's economic and infrastructure development including affordable housing, environmental protection,

disaster risk management, and gender.

- A portion of ADB's assistance will be invested **by the state government as equity into the Tamil Nadu Shelter Fund to catalyze private sector financing** and support investments mainly in industrial housing and working women's hostels for low-income and migrant workers.
- **In addition, ADB will provide a \$1.5 million technical assistance (TA)** grant from its Technical Assistance Special Fund to support the capacity building of government agencies responsible for delivering affordable housing and regional planning in Tamil Nadu.
- The TA will document successful approaches to affordable housing delivery, including the graduation programme for vulnerable relocated beneficiaries, that can be adopted in other cities and countries.

#### Central Grant of Rs. 2,345 Crore Released To Rajasthan Under Jal Jeevan Mission

- The Union Government led by Prime Minister, Shri Narendra Modi is **according top priority** to make provision of tap water connection in every rural household across the country, for which since August, 2019, **Jal Jeevan Mission is under implementation in partnership with States.**
- With undivided focus to expedite the implementation of Jal Jeevan Mission in the State of Rajasthan, the Government of India released Rs. 2,345 Crore of Central grants to the State.
- Central fund of Rs. 10,180.50 Crore has been allocated to the State for 2021-22 for the implementation of Jal Jeevan Mission, which is nearly four times the fund allocation made during 2020-21.
- Rajasthan plans to make provision of tap water supply to every rural household of the State by 2024. As on date, out of 101.32 lakh rural households in the **State, 21.71 lakh (21.4%) households have tap water connections.**
- Since the announcement of Jal Jeevan Mission in 2019, about 9.97 lakh households have been provided with tap water supply.
- The State has a huge task ahead to make provision of tap water supply to remaining 80 lakh households by 2024.

#### Central grant of Rs. 120 Crore released to Manipur under Jal Jeevan Mission

- The Union Government led by Prime Minister, Shri Narendra Modi is according top priority to make provision of tap water connection in every rural household across the country, for which since August, 2019, Jal Jeevan Mission is under implementation in partnership with States.
- With undivided focus to expedite the implementation of Jal Jeevan Mission in the State of Manipur, the Government of India released Rs. 120 Crore of Central grant to the State.
- Central fund of Rs. 481 Crore has been allocated to the State for 2021-22 for the implementation of Jal Jeevan Mission, which is nearly four times the fund allocation made during 2020-21.

- Manipur plans to make provision of tap water supply to every rural household of the State by September, 2022.
- As on date, out of 4.51 lakh rural households in the State, 2.67 lakh (59.2%) households have tap water connections.
- Since the announcement of Jal Jeevan Mission in 2019, about 2.41 lakh households have been provided with tap water supply.
- In 2021-22, the State plans to provide tap water connections to 2.26 lakh rural households.
- Further in 2021-22, **Rs. 78 Crore is allocated to Manipur as 15th Finance Commission grant for water & sanitation to Rural Local Bodies/ PRIs** and there is an assured funding of Rs. 414 Crore for the next five years i.e. up to 2025-26 to the rural local bodies

#### Union Minister Dr. Jitendra Singh to inaugurate 7th International Science Festival of India in Goa

- The 7th International Science Festival of India will kickstart in Panjim, Goa.
- The festival will be inaugurated by the union minister for Science and Technology Dr. **Jitendra Singh**. **Chief Minister Pramod Sawant, Union Minister Shripad Naik**, and other dignitaries will be present.
- The festival is being organized in collaboration with the Union Ministry of Geology, Department of Science and Technology, Vigyan Bharati, National Institute of Polar and Marine Research, and Government of Goa.
- Over 10,000 students from all over the country are expected to participate in this four-day festival, which will take place in **hybrid mode – virtual mode and offline mode**.
- Last year, due to the pandemic, the festival was conducted in virtual mode.
- The theme of this year's festival is 'Celebrating Creativity in Science'.
- This festival will host 12 events, including science and technology exhibitions.
- Since India is celebrating 75 years of Independence, the various programmes will fall under the five categories, namely Freedom Struggle, ideas -75, actions-75, resolve-75, and achievements -75.

#### Commerce Minister Piyush Goyal launches 'Meghalayan Age' store in New Delhi

- Commerce Minister Piyush Goyal launched the 'Meghalayan Age' store in New Delhi.
- Shawls, Bamboo, Handicrafts, and various other unique products of the Northeast will have a **huge market not only for visitors from India but also from across the world**.
- Complimenting **Meghalaya's Chief Minister Conrad Sangma** for setting up the store, Mr. Goyal, it will provide local artisans and more than 43 thousand weavers of the state a window to showcase the rich culture, heritage, art, and ethnic products of Meghalaya.

#### NITI Aayog to establish 1000 Atal Tinkering Laboratories in Jammu and Kashmir

- In the Union Territory of **Jammu and Kashmir**, the **NITI Aayog will be establishing 1000 Atal Tinkering Laboratories (ATLs)** of which 187 will be established by the end of this financial year.
- The ATL is **an initiative to boost cognitive development in children** where they are given avenues to experiment and widen their understanding of phenomena on **scientific ideas**.
- Chief Secretary, Dr. Arun Kumar Mehta chaired a meeting to take stock of arrangements for opening ATLs in various Educational Institutions of J&K.
- Worth to mention, from 187 of this year's target, 31 ATLs are being established across Government schools of the UT, whereas 50 will come up in various educational institutions including KVs, JNVs, and private schools.
- The process for establishing the **remaining 106 labs** will also be initiated shortly.
- The CS directed the School Education Department to fix timelines for establishing these laboratories in various districts of the UT and also emphasize the nomination of trainers/champions against suitable incentives.

#### Kameng District, Arunachal Pradesh

- In order to develop and promote sports in the region and also to encourage and promote the highly talented youths of the area to rise not only in the national but also in the international level as well, **North Eastern Council, Ministry of Development of North Eastern Region (MDoNER)** have sanctioned a project for construction of **Outdoor Stadium at Chayangtajo in East Kameng District, Arunachal Pradesh**.
- The project was sanctioned in 2015 for a project cost of Rs. 392.34 Lakhs, out of which NEC share was 90% of the project cost and remaining 10% was borne by the State Government.
- The project was implemented by the Directorate of Sports and Youth Affairs, Government of Arunachal Pradesh.

#### Sonowal inaugurates River Cruise Service at Mormugao Port Trust Goa:

- Union Minister for Ports Shipping and Waterways Shri Sarbananda Sonowal inaugurated the River Cruise Services at the Marmugao Port in Goa.
- He announced that Services will immediately begin on all the proposed routes with its FRP double deck boats to give the tourists a complete experience of Goa a culture and history.
- This will be a common user's facility and any entrepreneur can venture into and start a new and similar type of Service from this berthing facility, available in the Port.
- This opportunity in Goa is to explore new ventures in river and island cruising which is not tapped so far and it will be **a unique opportunity to experience such an unexplored venture in Goa**.
- The Minister also visited the Port's operational areas including the **Cruise Terminal Berth where**

**International & Domestic Cruise Terminal** is proposed to be set up and PPP Terminals operated by the **South West Port Ltd (SWPL)** and **Adani Mormugao Port Trust Pvt. Ltd. (AMPTPL)** to inspect the operations.

#### Central Grant of Rs 604 Crore Released To J&K Under Jal Jeevan Mission:

- With a focus to expedite the implementation of **Jal Jeevan Mission in Jammu & Kashmir**, the Government of India released **Rs 604 Crore to the Union Territory**.
- **Central fund of Rs 2,747 Crore has been allocated to the UT in 2021-22** for the implementation of Jal Jeevan Mission, which is nearly four times the allocation made during 2020-21.
- J&K plans to become 'Har Ghar Jal' UT by August, 2022. Out of 18.35 lakh rural households in the UT, 10.39 lakh (57%) households have tap water connections.
- Despite adverse weather conditions and challenges of transportation in many areas in this difficult terrain, water supply work is in full swing to make provision of tap water supply in villages.
- Provision has been made for tap water supply to every rural household in 2 districts of Srinagar and Ganderbal and 1,070 villages.
- Union Government led by Prime Minister Shri Narendra Modi accords top priority to make provision of tap water connection in **every rural household across the country under Jal Jeevan Mission** as there is a massive increase in budgetary allocation to **Rs. 2,747.17 Crore in 2021-22, from Rs. 681.77 Crore** in the preceding year.

#### Drinking Water Supply Schemes of Rs. 56.7 Crore Approved Under Jal Jeevan Mission In Uttarakhand:

- Drinking water supply schemes of Rs 56.7 Crore were approved under Jal Jeevan Mission by Uttarakhand in the State-level scheme sanctioning committee (SLSSC) meeting held on 13th December, 2021.
- Of the **five water supply schemes sanctioned**, two are single-village scheme and three are multi-village schemes. It will provide tap water connection to more than 6,800 rural households.
- Thus, in the past one month drinking **water supply scheme worth Rs 549.60 Crore** for 706 villages spread across 6 districts benefitting 49,298 households have been approved for Uttarakhand.
- As on date, out of 15.18 lakh rural household in **the State, 7.49 lakh (49.39%)** are getting tap water supply in their homes. In 2021-22, the State plans to provide tap water connections to 2.64 lakh household.
- Under Jal Jeevan Mission (JJM), there is provision for constitution of **State Level Scheme Sanctioning Committee (SLSSC)** for consideration and approval of schemes to be taken up for making provision of tap water supply to rural households.
- The SLSSC acts as a State level Committee to consider water supply schemes/ projects, and a nominee of the **National Jal Jeevan Mission (NJJM)**, Government of India is a member of the committee.

### Madhya Pradesh government organises first drone fair at Gwalior:

- In Madhya Pradesh, the first drone fair in the country was organised at Gwalior. Chief Minister Shivraj Singh Chouhan, Madhya Pradesh will be made a leading state by using drone technology.
- Chief Minister was addressing the youths and farmers present at the "Drone Mela" in Gwalior.
- Union Minister of Agriculture and Farmers Welfare Narendra Singh Tomar and Union Minister of Civil Aviation Jyotiraditya Scindia were also present in the programme.
- AIR correspondent reports, around 20 companies displayed their drones in the fair. Chief Minister said that along with agriculture drone technology is also playing an important role in the Swamitva Yojana being run in the state.
- The union minister for Agriculture and Farmers Welfare Narendra Singh Tomar, the drone technology is proving to be revolutionary for the farmers.
- Union Civil Aviation Minister Jyotiraditya Scindia, drone technology has brought new opportunities of development for the youth.
- He also informed that five Drone Schools will be opened in Gwalior, Bhopal, Indore, Jabalpur and Satna in Madhya Pradesh.

### Odisha tie-up with UNCDF to launch "Mission Shakti Living Lab":

- **Odisha** has signed an agreement with **United Nations Capital Development Fund (UNCDF)** to launch "**Mission Shakti Living Lab**" for the financial empowerment of women.
- A joint initiative designed by state government and UNCDF through its Centre for Financial Health, there are 6.02 lakh SHGs comprising 70 lakh members under Mission Shakti across rural and urban areas of the state.
- A Global Centre for Financial Health, to launch Mission Shakti Living Lab empowering women economically and drive gender equality.
- With the use of digital technologies and e-commerce, it will increase the income and financial well-being of women, **self-help groups (SHGs) and households by helping them in the factors of planning, saving, borrow or spending better.**
- It will address the barriers related to the autonomy and financial freedom of women.
- **Mission Shakti was launched in 2001** to enhance the holistic development of women, **there are 6.02 lakh self-help groups (SHGs) comprising 70 lakh members** across rural and urban areas of Odisha under the initiative.
- This initiative led to an increase in the income of SHG members from Rs 3,000 to 15,000 per month in Odisha.



### PM Modi addresses at foundation stone laying of Maa Umiya Dham Development Project in Gujarat:

- Prime Minister Narendra Modi, the Maa Umiya Dham Development Project in Gujarat is a perfect example of the notion of 'Sabka Prayas' as this auspicious project will be fulfilled with the efforts of all.
- He emphasized that the devotees should participate in the enterprise with a sense of spiritual purpose as well as a purpose of social service as serving the people is the biggest worship.
- The Prime Minister asked the gathering to include element of skill development in all the aspects of the organization. He recalled his visit to **Unjha during the Beti Bachao Beti Padhao campaign**.
- During that visit, he had stressed that steep fall in the female birth rate is a stigma.
- He thanked the people for accepting the challenge and gradually the number of girls has almost become equivalent to the boys.

### Azadi Ka Amritotsav: Defense Minister inaugurates exhibition of defence products of BEL in Uttarakhand:

- Defence Minister Rajnath Singh inaugurated the exhibition of defence products of Bharat Electronics Limited in Kotdwar, Uttarakhand through virtual medium.
- The exhibition is organised as a part of Azadi ka Amritotsav. The Defence Minister, now the defence-related equipment are being made in the country itself, which is a step towards self-reliant India.
- **BEL has a big contribution** in this sector. The defence exhibition will establish the trust of the common people in the defence system and equipment of their country.
- Officers and employees of BEL Kotdwar and school children were present in the exhibition. The exhibition will run till December 19.
- An exhibition is also being organized in **Dehradun by the Ordnance Factory**.

### 7th edition of India International Science festival begins in Panaji, Goa

- Union Minister of State (Independent Charge) Science & Technology, Dr Jitendra Singh inaugurated the seventh edition of India International Science Festival (IISF- 2021) at Panaji, Goa.
- The theme of 4-day IISF 2021 is 'Azadi Ka Amrit Mahotsav' – "Celebrating Creativity, Science, Technology and Innovation for a prosperous India".
- Aim :
- To bring into use the innovations by the people and develop technology that is affordable to the masses.
- India International Science festival (IISF) is a joint program of the Ministry of Science & Technology, Ministry of Earth Sciences and Vijnana Bharati (VIBHA) a swadeshi movement of Bharat.
- IISF will provide a platform to young students, scientists and technocrats from across India for exchange of knowledge and ideas
- It also supporting flagship programmes like 'Swach Bharat Abhiyan', Swasth Bharat Abhiyan 'Make in

India', 'Digital India', 'Smart Villages', 'Smart Cities' ' Namami Gange', 'Unnath Bharat Abhiyan' initiated by the Prime Minister in the last 7 years.

- Note :
- The first program of IISF was held in 2015 and the sixth edition of this annual event was organized in 2020.

#### PM Modi chairs All India Mayors' Conference in Varanasi

- Prime Minister Narendra Modi has chaired the All-India Mayors' Conference in Varanasi via video conferencing.
- He urged the mayors to work towards cleanliness in their wards and there should be beauty competition between the wards.
- UP Chief Minister Yogi Adityanand and the Urban Development Minister, Hardeep Singh participated apart from other dignitaries.
- Mayors from various states across the country participated in the conference, being **organised by the Department of Urban Development, Uttar Pradesh.**
- The theme of the Conference is "New Urban India". It has been the constant endeavour of the Prime Minister to ensure ease of living in urban areas.
- The government has launched multiple schemes and initiatives to address the issues of dilapidated urban infrastructure and lack of amenities.
- A special focus of **these efforts has been the state of Uttar Pradesh**, which has witnessed tremendous progress and transformation of the urban landscape, especially in the last five years.

#### Haryana Govt starts Khel Nursery Scheme to promote sports in state

- The Haryana government has started the Khel Nursery Scheme to promote sports in the state. This was stated by Minister of State for Sports and Youth Affairs Sandeep Singh.
- Under the scheme, sports nurseries will be started in government, private educational institutions, and private sports institutions.
- For this, applications have been invited by the department **till January 20, 2022.**
- With this scheme, sports talent will get an opportunity to emerge at the grassroots level.
- Under the scheme, sports nurseries are being opened for the sports **included in the Olympic, Asian and Commonwealth Games.**

#### AIIB to help Chennai make urban services green and resilient

- The Asian Infrastructure Investment Bank (AIIB) has approved the \$150 million 'Chennai City Partnership: Sustainable Urban Services Programme' that seeks to strengthen institutions and improve the quality and

financial sustainability of selected urban services in Chennai.

- Tamil Nadu is an economic powerhouse and is one of India's most urbanized States. Chennai dominates the State's demographic and economic landscape and is experiencing rapid physical growth and changes in its boundaries.
- However, Chennai faces tremendous infrastructure deficits and low service quality in core urban sectors such as water resource management, water supply and sanitation, urban mobility, solid waste management and public health
- AIIB's mission is to finance 'Infrastructure for Tomorrow' (i4t)-green infrastructure with sustainability, innovation, and connectivity at its core.
- India, in their mission to increase the resilience of Chennai and transforming the city into a green, livable, competitive, and resilient capital.

#### **NECBDC Guwahati has organized a Two-Day Youth Conclave for Empowering the Youth of Northeast India**

- **North East Cane And Bamboo Development Council(NECBDC) Guwahati** organised a Two-Day Youth Conclave organized by Chandra Prabha Saikiani Centre for Women Studies Tezpur University (A Central University), **Assam**.
- Under the aegis of **Rajiv Gandhi National Institute of Youth Development**, an Institute of National Importance under the **Ministry of Youth Affairs and Sports**, Sriperumbudur, Tamil Nadu, Govt. of India. Empowering the Youth of Northeast India through the Advancement of Technology and Skill.

#### **Haryana Government Launches 'Khel Nursery Scheme'**

- Haryana Minister of State for Sports and Youth Affairs Sandeep Singh had started 'Khel Nursery Scheme 2022-23' to promote sports in the state.
- About the Scheme :
- To build sports nurseries in government, private educational institutions, and private sports institutes in order to develop sports in the state.
- For this, applications have been invited by the department till January 20, 2022.
- The sports nurseries are being opened for the sports included in the Olympic, Asian and Commonwealth Games.

#### **Under Jal Jeevan Mission, Rs 10,180 Crore Central fund allocated to Rajasthan in 2021-22**

- Mission mode approach being adopted in the State of Rajasthan for providing tap water supply supply to every rural household of the State under Jal Jeevan Mission, the flagship programme of the Union Government.
- Government of India is providing all out support to States to make provision of tap water supply to every

rural household of the country **by 2024**.

- For implementation of Jal Jeevan Mission, there is no dearth of funds.
- To assist the State of Rajasthan, to achieve 'Har Ghar Jal', Union Minister of Jal Shakti, Shri Gajendra Singh Shekhawat approved Central allocation of Rs 10,180 Crore for Jal Jeevan Mission in 2021-22, a four-fold increase from Rs 2,522 Crore allocated in 2020-21.
- Out of 1.01 Crore rural households in the State, 11.74 lakh (11.5%) households had tap water supply as of 15th August 2019, when Jal Jeevan Mission was announced by the Hon'ble Prime Minister.
- Since launch of the mission, 9.65 lakh households (9.5%) have been provided tap water connections in the State of Rajasthan. Today, 21.39 (21.1%) lakh rural homes in the State are getting tap water supply in their homes.
- In 2021-22, Rs 1,712 Crore has been allocated to Rajasthan as 15th Finance Commission tied grant for water & sanitation to Rural Local Bodies/ PRIs.
- There is an assured funding of Rs 9,032 Crore for the next five years i.e. up to 2025-26. This huge investment in rural areas of Rajasthan, will accelerate economic activities and boost rural economy.
- It will create new employment opportunities in villages.

#### **Central Silk Board and the Assam Forest and Environment Department sign a MoU to support forest-based families dealing in Sericulture**

- The Chief Minister along with Union Minister of State Jardosh inaugurated Bodoland Textile Mission and Bodoland Silk Mission.
- An MoU was also signed between the Central Silk Board and the Assam Forest and Environment Department.
- This MoU will support forest-based families in frontier forest area of Assam who earn their living by rearing silkworms.
- It will also provide proper assistance in providing new livelihood opportunities to them.
- Mr. Rajat Ranjan Okhandiyar, Member Secretary, and Forest Head of the Assam Forest and Environment Department, Mrs. Alka Bhagav presented the MoU.
- Minister for Housing and Urban Affairs Ashok Singhal, Minister for WPT&BC U.G. Brahma, Deputy Chief BTC Gobinda Basumatary and a host of other dignitaries were present on the occasion.
- Union Minister of State for Textiles and Railways, Darshana Vikram Jardosh attended one-year celebrations of the **Bodoland Territorial Region Council ( BTR) at Kokrajhar**.

#### **Piyush Goyal inaugurates Packaged Drinking Water Test Facility at National Test House, Ghaziabad**

- Union Minister of Commerce & Industry, Consumer Affairs, Food & Public Distribution and Textiles, Shri

Piyush Goyal inaugurated the Packaged Drinking Water Test Facility at National Test House (NTH), Ghaziabad.

- With the inauguration of two equipment, - **Ultra High-Performance Liquid Chromatograph (UHPLC)** and Ion Chromatograph (IC), **NTH-Ghaziabad** has added a feather in comprehensive **quality testing facility for water**.
- UHPLC is helpful for quantification of different organic compounds especially residual pesticides in Drinking Water samples.
- NTH (NR), Ghaziabad is equipped with facilities of Drinking water, Transformers, Household appliances, LPG Gas Stove, Pressure Cooker, Impulse Voltage Test of transformers, thereby serving the interest of consumers by quality assurance practices.
- With the inauguration of two equipment, NTH-Ghaziabad has added valuable testing facility for water.
- The equipment UHPLC will be helpful for quantification of different organic compound particularly residual pesticides in Water samples, whereas IC will be used for quantification of different anions particularly bromate in packaged drinking water.
- All NTH labs, including Ghaziabad, have been mapped on the 'Parakh' portal, which is a Geographic Information System (GIS) based Unified Laboratory Network, developed by DPIIT.
- The portal makes it possible to search labs for a particular product, standard, test method in a state or a city and would facilitate transparency in the testing activities.

#### **Signing of agreements with KFW, Germany for energy reform programme, Madhya Pradesh:**

- The Government of India and the German Development Bank – KFW (Kreditanstalt für Wiederaufbau) has signed agreements for Euro 140 million reduced interest loan and Euro 2 million grant for Energy Reform Programme, Madhya Pradesh.
- Shri Rajat Kumar Mishra, Additional Secretary, Department of Economic Affairs in the Ministry of Finance, signed the agreements on behalf of Government of India and Dr. Juergen Welschhof, Head of Division, Energy, South Asia signed for KFW.
- The project comprises of 2 components namely, implementation of smart meters & **Advanced Metering Infrastructure (AMI)**; and, separation of agriculture & non-agriculture feeders.
- The Project will contribute to a more stable, secure and climate and environmentally friendly energy supply in India by upgrading and strengthening distribution networks in Madhya Pradesh.
- It will contribute to an effective, technically and economically efficient as well as socially and ecologically sustainable energy supply.

### 7 new Internet Exchanges launched by MoS (Electronics & IT) Shri Rajeev Chandrasekhar and MoS( Law & Justice) in Uttar Pradesh:

- **Rajeev Chandrasekhar**- Minister of State, Electronics and Information Technology, Skill Development & Entrepreneurship, Government of India **along with SP Singh Baghel, Minister of State** (Law & Justice) and **Anil Kumar Jain CEO, NIXI** inaugurated the **7 new internet exchange nodes** in multiple cities of UP, the main event was held in Agra.
- The inauguration of these new internet exchanges of NIXI in India will help in enhancing and improving the quality of Internet and Broadband services in Uttar Pradesh and nearby regions, as well as the internet provided by them, will bring about a transformation in the lives of the people of Uttar Pradesh.
- **NIXI's 7 new Internet Exchange** nodes are bound to give impetus to the Internet ecosystem in the state.
- This launch will impact almost every sector of the state, ranging from health, education. agriculture, startup ecosystem to MSMEs & other business verticals.
- This development will set up a robust foundation for Artificial Intelligence, Machine Learning & IoT in Uttar Pradesh.
- Accessibility & convenience will increase for citizens in terms of availing government benefits, improving quality of life. Everyone in the state will benefit from the opening of seven Internet exchanges.

### Nitin Gadkari inaugurates and lays foundation stone of National Highway projects of 240 Km worth Rs.9119 crore in Meerut and Muzaffarnagar in Uttar Pradesh:

- Union Minister for Road Transport and Highways Shri Nitin Gadkari has inaugurated and laid foundation stone of National Highway projects of 240 Km worth Rs.9119 crore in Meerut and Muzaffarnagar in Uttar Pradesh.
- Inaugurating and laying of foundation stone **for 6 National Highway projects in Meerut with a total cost of Rs.8,364 crore** Shri Gadkari, with these projects it will be easy for the farmers of the area to take their crops to the market, which will lead to their economic upliftment.
- The foundation Stone Laying and Inauguration of **3 National Highway Projects worth Rs 755 Crore** in Muzaffarnagar Shri Gadkari emphasized on welfare of farmers by leveraging technology and research for economic prosperity.
- He stressed on the importance of Ethanol, Hydrogen and other bio-fuels for overall progress, self-sufficiency and sustainable development.
- Gadkari also launched first Intelligent Transport system (ITS) on 6 Lane Eastern Peripheral Expressway at Dasna, Ghaziabad.
- This revolutionary state of the art technology will achieve traffic efficiency by minimizing traffic problems,



efficient infrastructure usage, enriching users with prior information about traffic and reduce travel time as well as enhance safety and comfort of commuters.

#### **Drinking Water Supply Schemes Of Rs. 164.03 Crore Approved Under Jal Jeevan Mission In Uttarakhand:**

- **Drinking water supply schemes of Rs. 164.03 Crore** were approved under **Jal Jeevan Mission** by **Uttarakhand** in the State-level scheme sanctioning committee (SLSSC) meeting held on 23rd December, 2021.
- Of the eight water supply schemes sanctioned, all are multi-village schemes.
- It will provide tap water connection to more than 9,200 rural homes.
- These eight schemes will benefit 140 villages in Almora, Bageshwar, Dehradun, Nainital and Uttarkashi districts.
- **It is expected that by December, 2022** when these schemes will complete, more than 48 thousand people living in these 140 villages will get adequate clean tap water supply for next 30-40 years on regular basis.
- **Under Jal Jeevan Mission (JJM)**, there is provision for constitution of State Level Scheme Sanctioning Committee (SLSSC) for consideration and approval of schemes to be taken up for making provision of tap water supply to rural households.
- The SLSSC acts as a **State level Committee** to consider water supply schemes/ projects, and a nominee of the **National Jal Jeevan Mission (NJJM)**, Government of India is a member of the committee.

#### **AYUSH Ministry gives major boost to healthcare facilities in Uttar Pradesh; to invest ₹553.36 crore:**

- The Ministry of AYUSH announced a slew of major initiatives to push healthcare facilities in the state of Uttar Pradesh.
- **A total amount of ₹553.36 crore has been released** by the Government of India to Uttar Pradesh for various activities under the National AYUSH Mission.
- In an effort towards building a sustainable, effective and affordable healthcare in the country, eight new 50 bedded integrated AYUSH hospitals were inaugurated.
- These are located in Deoria, Koushambi, Sonbhadra, Lucknow, Kanpur, Sant Kabir Nagar, Kanpur Dehat, and Lalitpur. These were built with a **total capital outlay of ₹72 crores**.
- A total of 500 new AYUSH Health & Wellness Centres (HWCs) were also inaugurated in different parts of the state.
- The Union Cabinet has also approved the operationalization of 12,500 AYUSH Health & Wellness Centers (AYUSH Health & Wellness Centers) component under Ayushman Bharat for implementation through National AYUSH Mission for the period up to 2023-24.
- The objective of this component is to provide the services of a holistic health model based on AYUSH

principles and practices to reduce the burden of disease and empower the public for "**self-care**".

- Now, through the implementation of the National AYUSH Mission in the second phase which will continue till **2025-26**, it is also proposed to launch a targeted AYUSH public health program involving States and Union Territories.

#### **Amp Energy India commissions 13.5 MW solar power project in Maharashtra:**

- **Renewable energy firm Amp Energy India** has commissioned its second open access solar project in **Maharashtra**.
- Amp Energy India has recently commissioned a **13.5 MW solar power project** for cement manufacturer Orient Cement
- The **13.5 MW project at Osmanabad, in Maharashtra** will supply solar power to Orient Cement's manufacturing facility in the State
- Amp Energy India has already developed large open access projects including some landmark projects such as the **Largest Solar Open Access Project in Maharashtra (30MW)**, the First captive solar open access project in Uttar Pradesh (42MW) and its 3rd Open Access project in Karnataka (30 MW).

#### **Indian Army establishes Quantum Laboratory in Mhow, Madhya Pradesh:**

- The Army is making steady, yet significant strides in the field of emerging technology domains. The Army, with support from the **National Security Council Secretariat (NSCS)** has recently established the Quantum Lab at Military College of Telecommunication Engineering, **Mhow in Madhya Pradesh** to spearhead research and training in this key developing field.
- **Army Chief Gen M M Naravane** was briefed on the facility during his recent visit to **Mhow**.
- The Army has also established an **Artificial Intelligence (AI)** Centre at the same institution with over 140 deployments in forward areas and active support of industry and academia.
- Training on cyber warfare is being imparted through a state of art cyber range, and cyber security labs.
- **Indian Army in the field of Quantum Technology** will help leapfrog into next-generation communication and transform the current system of cryptography in **the Indian Armed Forces to Post Quantum Cryptography (PQC)**.

#### **Haryana CM launched 'Haryana Kaushal Rozgar Nigam' Web-portal**

- The Chief Minister of Haryana, Manohar Lal Khattar has launched the 'Haryana Kaushal Rozgar Nigam portal' and announced to set up the Atal Park & Smriti Kendra in Gurugram, Haryana.
- It aims to deploy contractual manpower and manpower of outsourced category services in Government Departments, Boards, Corporations, Statutory Entities, State Universities, and Other Agencies owned and controlled by the State Government.

- The **CM also honoured 78 officers** and employees for delivering the best services in various fields. He also launched a magazine '**Vyavastha Parivartan Se Susashan**' and the **2022 official calendar**.
- The portal will help in collecting and analysing the data of All the DC Rate/ Contractual Staff Employees.
- It will play a role in publishing Advertisement for the Contractual Staff Recruitment, Conducting the recruitment process such as Written Exam, Interview, Skill Test, and so on.
- It will also receive the contractual staff requirement from the various departments, boards, organizations, universities, etc.

#### French's Dassault Systemes signs MoU with TIDCO to set up 3DEXPERIENCE Lab in Tamil Nadu

- French software company Dassault Systemes signed a Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) with Tamil Nadu Industrial Development Corporation (TIDCO) to set up The Tamil Nadu Center of Advance Manufacturing (TANCAM) at the TIDEL Park, Chennai, Tamil Nadu.
- This is first of its kind Center of Excellence (CoE) in India, TANCAM will work as a Center of Excellence (CoE) in India and will provide a dedicated IT (Information Technology) engineering ecosystem to support the MSME (Micro, Small & Medium Enterprises) sector and students across Tamil Nadu.

#### Tamil Nadu Government declared 'Tamil Thai Vaazhthu' by Manonmaniam Sundaranar as State Song

- Chief Minister of Tamil Nadu M K Stalin, announced that "Tamil Thai Vazhthu"('Neerarum Kadaludutha') from Manonmaneeyam(Tamil Drama), written by Tamil scholar Manonmaniam Sundaranar Pillai as the State Song of Tamil Nadu.
- The song should be sung in **55 seconds** in Mullaipaani Ragam(Mohana Raagam).

### **CURRENT AFFAIRS: BUSINESS NEWS**

#### Bajaj Finserv kicks off the second phase of 'Savdhaan Rahein. Safe Rahein'

- **Bajaj Finserv**, one of the largest financial conglomerates in India, has kicked off the **second phase of 'Savdhaan Rahein. Safe Rahein'**. a **public awareness campaign** focusing on Life Insurance Frauds.
- Aim:
- To **educate** its **customers** and the wider public on how to stay safe from such frauds.
- Through this awareness initiative, Bajaj Finserv aims to convey a very important message to consumers opting for Life insurance policies to check policy documents carefully and verify the details from the insurers' websites only.
- It highlights the details that policy holders need to check to verify the policy authenticity; differentiating between a genuine and fake policy and most importantly where the policyholders can report these incidents in the event of a fraud.

- The campaign has a **catchy jingle 'Na Ji Na Ji'** with an endearing character named 'Gupta Ji' who goes around spreading these awareness messages.

#### OECD slashes India growth forecast to 9.4% for FY22

- Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD) decreased India's growth forecast to 9.4% for FY22 from 9.7% estimated in September 2021.
- In September, while paring India's FY22 growth projection from 9.9% to 9.7%, OECD had cited still persisting risk of lasting costs from the pandemic.
- The **38-member intergovernmental organization** has projected the Indian economy to grow at 8.1% in FY23, and moderate to 5.5% in FY24.
- However, Chief Economic Adviser K. Subramanian presented a more positive growth outlook for the year, anticipating double-digit growth in FY22, 6.5-7 percent growth in the next year and over 7 percent growth thereafter.

#### India, Russia set target of trade worth 30 billion dollars, investment worth 50 billion dollars by 2025:

- Prime Minister Narendra Modi has the first 2 Plus 2 dialogues between defence and foreign ministers which took place earlier, starts a new mechanism to improve behavioural cooperation.
- Russia is adopting a long-term vision to strengthen bilateral partnership in economic affairs.
- Also, they have set a target of trade worth 30 billion dollars and investment worth 50 billion dollars by 2025.
- Under Make In India, co-development and co-production are strengthening India Russia partnership in the defence sector and they are also heading closer in cooperation in space and civil nuclear sectors.
- Four agreements were signed after this meeting, including contract for procurement of over six lakh AK-203 Assault Rifles and agreement on Program for Military Technical Cooperation from 2021 to 2031.
- AK-203 Assault Rifles will tremendously augment the operational capability of our soldiers. Hence, this contract ends the long quest of **Indian Army to replace aging INSAS Rifle with a modern weapon.**
- **AK-203 Rifle, having an effective range of 300 meters** is a light weight and easy to use Modern Assault weapon with proven technology.
- This will enhance the combat potential of our soldiers to meet the operational challenges. On the other hand, the unit located in **Korwa, in Amethi will boost the manufacturing eco-system in Uttar Pradesh Defence Corridor.**
- It will also generate local employment opportunities and the economic growth will see an upswing.

#### British Airways becomes first airline to use sustainable aviation fuel:

- British Airways signed a multi-year agreement with Phillips 66 Limited becoming the first airline to use

sustainable aviation fuel produced on a commercial scale in the UK.

- It had reached the agreement with a **refinery in north Lincolnshire** to purchase thousands of tonnes of sustainable aviation fuel (SAF), which would add up to the equivalent of **700 transatlantic flights on a Boeing 787 with net zero carbon emission**.
- Thousands of tonnes of sustainable aviation fuel (SAF) will be produced for **the first time in the UK at the Phillips 66 Humber Refinery near Immingham** and will be supplied to British Airways to power a number of its flights from early 2022.
- SAF is a lower carbon-intensity fuel that can be produced from renewable feedstocks such as waste vegetable oils, fats and greases.
- The airline, **which is driving to achieve net-zero carbon emissions by 2050**, will purchase enough sustainable fuel to reduce lifecycle CO2 emissions by almost 100,000 tonnes, the equivalent of powering 700 net zero CO2 emissions flights between London and New York on its fuel-efficient Boeing 787 aircraft

#### Central grant of ₹170 Crore released to Meghalaya under Jal Jeevan Mission:

- With a focus to expedite the implementation of Jal Jeevan Mission in Meghalaya, the Government of India released 169.60 Crore to the State. Central fund of ₹678.39 Crore has been allocated to the State for 2021-22 for the implementation of Jal Jeevan Mission, which is nearly four times the allocation for 2020-21.
- There are 5.90 lakh rural households in the State, out of which 1.88 lakh households (31.94%) have tap water connection.
- Top priority is accorded by the Union Government to the Jal Jeevan Mission as evidenced by the massive increase in budgetary allocation to ₹92,309 Crore in 2021-22, from ₹23,022 Crore in the preceding year.
- Further in 2021-22, **Rs. 82 Crore is allocated to Meghalaya as 15th Finance Commission** grant for water & sanitation to Rural Local Bodies/ PRIs and there is an assured funding of Rs. 426 Crore for the next five years i.e. up to 2025-26 to the rural local bodies.
- Announced by Prime Minister Shri Narendra Modi on 15th August, 2019, **with the aim to provide assured tap water supply to every rural home by 2024**, Jal Jeevan Mission is being implemented in partnership with States.
- Despite challenges faced due to COVID-19 pandemic and subsequent lockdowns, over 5.38 Crore (28%) households have been provided with tap water supply since the launch of the mission.
- As on date, 8.62 Crore (45%) rural households receive potable water through household taps.
- Goa, Telangana, Andaman & Nicobar Islands, Dadra & Nagar Haveli and Daman & Diu, Puducherry and Haryana have become 'Har Ghar Jal' State/ UT i.e., **100% coverage of tap connections in rural**

households. Meghalaya aims to become 'Har Ghar Jal' State in 2022.

#### Central Grant Of ₹402 Crore Released to Punjab Under Jal Jeevan Mission:

- With a focus to expedite the implementation of Jal Jeevan Mission in Punjab, the Government of India released 402.24 Crore to the State.
- **Central fund of ₹1,656.39 Crore** has been allocated to the State for 2021-22 for the implementation of Jal Jeevan Mission, which is nearly four times the allocation for 2020-21.
- There are **34.41 lakh rural households in the State**, out of which 31.55 lakh rural households (91.68%) have tap water connection.
- In 2021-22, the State plans to provide tap water connections to 8.69 lakh rural households.
- Top priority is accorded by the Union Government to the Jal Jeevan Mission as evidenced by the massive increase in budgetary allocation to Rs. 92,309 Crore in 2021-22, from Rs. 23,022 Crore in the preceding year.
- Further in 2021-22, Rs. 616 Crore is allocated to Punjab as 15th Finance Commission grant for water & sanitation to Rural Local Bodies/ PRIs and there is an assured funding of Rs 3,246 Crore for the next five years i.e., up to 2025-26 to the rural local bodies.

#### India's pharmaceutical exports to Pakistan increase from USD 129.32 million in 2016-17 to USD 152.32 million in 2020-21:

- Minister of State for Commerce and Industry Anupriya Patel, India's pharmaceutical exports to Pakistan have increased from 129.32 million US dollars in 2016-17 to 152.32 million dollars in 2020-21.
- The few instances of **non-receipt of payments** are being taken up with relevant authorities concerned for resolution.

#### Govt receives about Rs 19 Cr from Cotton Corporation of India Ltd:

- Secretary, Department of Investment and Public Asset Management Tuhin Kanta Pandey, the government has received about 19 crore rupees from Cotton Corporation of India Ltd and 59 crore rupees from KIOCL as dividend tranches.
- The Government has also received about 56 crore rupees from RCFL, 59 crore rupees from Indian Rare Earth Ltd and 9 crore rupees from MSTC as dividend tranches.

#### Wholesale price inflation spikes to 12-year high of 14.23% in November:

- Wholesale price inflation, WPI, rose to 12-year high of 14.23 percent in the month of November.
- According to the Commerce and Industry Ministry data, the **WPI is the highest since April 2005**.
- The rise in WPI numbers is mainly due to rise in manufacturing and food prices.
- Besides, soaring prices of mineral oils, basic metals, crude petroleum, and natural gas has also been a



major factor.

- In October, the WPI hit a five-month high of 12.54 percent.
- Retail inflation based on Consumer Price Index, CPI, has risen to a three-month high of 4.91 percent in November this year as per the government data released.

#### Index of Industrial Production in India grows 3.2 percent in October:

- The country's Index of Industrial Production (IIP), grew 3.2 percent in October.
- In September, Industrial production had risen 3.1 percent.
- Among the major sectors, the mining index in October gained 11.4 percent, and Electricity index advanced three percent.
- The manufacturing index rose 2 percent.
- IIP has maintained significant growth from March 2021 onwards, aided by a continuing low base effect last year.
- IIP is a key economic indicator of the manufacturing sector.
- The Eight Core Industries, Electricity, steel, refinery products, crude oil, coal, cement, natural gas, and fertilizers comprise more than 40 percent of the weight of items included in the Index of Industrial Production.

#### Retail inflation rises to 4.48 percent in October from 4.35 percent in September:

- Retail inflation based on Consumer Price Index, CPI, has risen to a three-month high of 4.91 percent in November this year.
- As per the Ministry of Statistics and Programme Implementation data released, this is the fifth month that the retail inflation has remained within **the RBI's target band of 2-6 percent**.
- The CPI inflation in rural India stood at 4.29 percent and 5.54 percent in urban areas in the review period of last month.
- The retail inflation had **risen to 4.48 percent** in October from 4.35 percent in September.
- RBI maintains retail inflation at four percent with a margin of 2 percent on either side.
- After five months, the CPI data in May has overshoot the **Reserve Bank's upper margin of 6 percent**.

#### India registers highest-ever annual FDI inflow of 81.97 billion dollars in 2020-21

- India has registered the highest ever annual Foreign Direct Investment (FDI) inflow of 81.97 billion dollar in 2020-21.
- Commerce and Industry Ministry, FDI inflows in the last seven financial years is over **440 billion dollar**, which is nearly **58 percent of the total FDI inflow in last 21 financial years**.
- The Ministry, top five countries from where FDI Equity Inflows were received during 2014 to 2021 are

Singapore, Mauritius, USA, Netherlands and Japan.

- Computer Software and Hardware sector attracted the largest share of FDI inflows, followed by Service, Trading and Telecommunications and the government has taken various steps to boost domestic and foreign investments in India.

#### Power sector CPSEs register 45% growth in Capital Expenditure Investment over previous year

- **Power sector Central Public Sector Enterprises (CPSEs)** have registered **45 per cent growth** in Capital Expenditure Investment over previous year.
- Power Ministry targets for Capital Expenditure of the CPSEs is around **50 thousand 690 crore rupees** in the current financial year.
- The Ministry, CPSEs have so far invested more than 32,000 crore rupees, which is **around 63 per cent** of the annual **Capital Expenditure target**.

#### Top Indian CEOs expect country's economy to grow at 9-10% during current fiscal

- The Indian economy is all set for a strong rebound in the current fiscal posting a growth rate of 9-10 per cent, says a CEOs poll conducted among the members of the CII National Council.
- As regards growth, about 10 per cent of the CEOs polled believe that it could even exceed 10 per cent during 2021-22.
- **CII President T V Narendran** announced the government's strong emphasis on public works, timely **interventions to boost liquidity** and several reforms carried out in the recent months have buoyed the optimism on higher economic growth.
- The poll is based on the responses of **about 100 CEOs**
- On the impact of Omicron on business, **55 per cent of the CEOs polled expect** that the services sector would get adversely impacted due to the spread of the new variant of coronavirus, while another 34 per cent of the CEOs indicated that it could adversely impact manufacturing activities.
- According to the CEOs poll, **56 per cent of the respondents indicated that the economy would grow in the range of 9 per cent to 10 per cent** during 2021-22, while another 10 per cent polled expected the growth rate in excess of 10 per cent this fiscal year

#### SEBI bans derivative trading in slew of agriculture commodities

- In a major blow, **the capital and commodity market regulator SEBI has banned** futures and options trading **in a host of agriculture commodities** including chana, mustardseed, soya bean and its derivatives, crude palm oil, moong, paddy (Basmati) and wheat for a **period of one year**.
- The ban would come into effect **from 20<sup>TH</sup> December**.
- Following this, **MCX has banned fresh position on crude palm oil** and allowed only squaring-off in the

December contracts.

- Only squaring up of existing positions will be allowed and no new Futures and Options contracts will be launched till further notice in any of these commodities.
- The drastic move comes on the back of concern over rising inflation and would unsettle **the entire commodity derivatives eco-system** including that of broking firms which will be literally left only with only metal and energy contracts to trade and promote.

### **CURRENT AFFAIRS: APPOINTMENTS AND RESIGNATION**

#### **Indian tech wizard Parag Agrawal takes over as CEO of Twitter**

- Indian tech wizard Parag Agrawal takes over as CEO of the social media platform Twitter following the departure of its co-founder CEO.
- **Twitter co-founder Jack Dorsey has stepped down as chief executive** of the company paving way for the current chief technical officer, Parag Agrawal, to take over.
- Mr Dorsey has been serving as chief executive of both Twitter and payment firm Square.
- Parag Agrawal, IIT alumnus, joins the likes of Sundar Pichai and Satya Nadella as Indian-origin techies at the help of the biggest tech companies of the world.
- A Computer Science and Engineering graduate from IIT Bombay, Agrawal is a Ph.D. from Stanford University

#### **Admiral R Hari Kumar assumes charge as 25th Chief of the Naval Staff**

- Admiral R. Hari Kumar has assumed charge as the 25th Chief of the Naval Staff.
- He received Guard of Honour at the South Block lawns in New Delhi as the new Chief of Naval Staff. **Admiral Hari Kumar succeeds Admiral Karambir Singh who superannuated.**
- Talking to reporters, Admiral Hari Kumar, it is a matter of great honour for him to take charge as the Chief of Naval Staff of Indian Navy.
- **Admiral R. Hari Kumar was commissioned on 1st January 1983** into the Executive Branch of the Indian Navy.
- During his long and distinguished service spanning nearly 39 years, he has served in a variety of Command, Staff and Instructional appointments.
- He has been decorated with the Param Vishist Seva Medal, Ati Vishist Seva Medal and Vishist Seva Medal.

#### **Petr Fiala has been appointed as new the Prime Minister of Czech Republic**

- Petr Fiala has been appointed as the new Prime Minister of the Czech Republic by President Milos Zeman. Fiala succeeds Andrej Babis.

- The alliance narrowly defeated the ANO movement led by billionaire Babis.
- Fiala, 57, heads the three-party coalition Together, which garnered 27.8% of the vote in early October.
- The centrist group of the Mayors and Independents and the left-wing Pirate Party joined with Fiala's coalition to remove Babis, who had served as prime minister since 2017.

#### Gita Gopinath to take on new role at IMF as First Deputy Managing Director

- **Indian-American Gita Gopinath**, the chief economist of the International **Monetary Fund**, is being promoted as **IMF's First Deputy Managing Director**, the fund announced.
- **She would replace Geoffrey Okamoto** who plans to leave the Fund early next year. Gopinath, who was scheduled to return to her academic position at **Harvard University in January 2022**, has served as the IMF's chief economist for three years.
- **Georgieva** noted that given the increasingly complex policy choices and difficult trade-offs facing the **IMF's 190 member countries** exacerbated by the pandemic some realignment in the roles and responsibilities of the Fund's senior management team is being undertaken

#### Sanjeev Kaushal becomes Chief Secretary of Haryana

- Haryana's 1986-batch IAS officer, Sanjeev Kaushal, has been appointed as the state's new chief secretary after the superannuation of his predecessor 1985-batch officer, Vijai Vardhan.
- Additional chief secretary, power, PK Das was posted as additional chief secretary, revenue and disaster management in place of Kaushal.
- **Sanjeev Kaushal** will be the **35th Chief Secretary of Haryana** since it was carved out as a separate state in 1966.
- Sanjeev Kaushal is due for retirement in July 2024.
- He will also hold charge of the general administration, training, personnel, parliamentary affairs, administrative and vigilance reforms departments, and the secretary in charge of plan coordination.
- Kaushal had also served as Managing Director, Haryana Warehousing Corporation, Chandigarh (1993-94), Joint Secretary to government of Haryana, Cooperation, Health & Medical Education, Wildlife Preservation & Rules Departments (1996-99).
- He served as Joint Secretary to the Government of India, two State Governments, two large Public Sector Undertakings (as Managing Director), the largest Municipal Corporation of Haryana (as the Chief Administrator of Faridabad Complex with the responsibilities of the Mayor & Commissioner both).
- He is known as an excellent officer for the services rendered by him as Assistant Collector (Training) in Madurai (Tamil Nadu) in 1987-88 and Sub-Collector in Coimbatore during the year 1988-90.
- He was the Director, Urban Development Department, Haryana Urban Infrastructure Development Board

and Chief Administrator, Haryana Slum Clearance Board from the year 2001-03.

#### Pradip Shah appointed NARCL Chairman; Sanjay Jain made IDRCL chief

- Pradip Shah, founder of IndAsia Fund Advisors, has been appointed chairman of National Asset Reconstruction Company (NARCL) while Aditya Birla Asset Reconstruction Company managing director Sanjay Jain will be the chief executive of India Debt Resolution Company (IDRCL).
- Also, **Diwakar Gupta**, former managing director of State Bank of India, is selected as **chairman of IDRCL**.
- Padmakumar Nair, chief general manager of SBI, was appointed as the MD of NARCL in May 2021.

#### Former CEC Shri Sunil Arora joins Board of Advisers for International Institute for Democracy and Electoral Assistance (IDEA)

- Sunil Arora, former Chief Election Commissioner of India has been invited to join the Board of Advisers for International Institute for Democracy and Electoral Assistance (IDEA).
- Sunil Arora brings rich leadership experience, knowledge and skills to contribute significantly to the working of the International Institute.
- The Institute is assisted by a **15-member Board of Advisers** who are eminent personalities or experts from a wide variety of backgrounds.
- The International Institute for Democracy and Electoral Assistance (International IDEA), **established in 1995, is an intergovernmental organization based in Stockholm, Sweden** with a mission to support sustainable democracy worldwide.
- International IDEA currently has **34 member countries** which include large and small, older and newer democracies from all continents.
- India has been one of the founding members of IDEA.
- Sunil Arora had been **the 23rd Chief Election Commissioner of India** from 2nd December 2018 to 12th April, 2021.
- Arora had joined ECI as Election Commissioner of India on 1st September 2017
- During his tenure of more than 42 months at ECI, the Commission successfully conducted the General Election to the **17th Lok Sabha in 2019** and 24 State Assembly Elections as also bye-elections and biennial elections.
- Shri Arora, a 1980 batch Indian Administrative Service officer, has earlier headed various key departments in the Government of India & State Government of Rajasthan.

#### US Polo ropes in Arjun Rampal as Indian brand ambassador

- US Polo Association, which is retailed in India by Arvind Fashions, has signed up Arjun Rampal as the

India brand ambassador.

- This the first time that an Indian ambassador has been roped in by the official brand of the United States Polo Association (USPA).
- As part of its strategy, the brand will release the new **'Play Together' campaign featuring Arjun Rampal** and will also unveil the new brand look across its 392 stores in India
- The new stores will have an **'all-white' interior with US Polo Assn.** brand colours. The signature red, blue & white stripes will welcome customers at the entrance
- Arjun's association with the brand draws an instant parallel to his real-life persona, making it very relatable for the audience.
- His huge fan base will encourage demand and excite our consumers to visit our remodelled stores that embody the spirit of Polo
- The 'Play Together' Campaign is conceptualised by WYP Creatives, produced by Karma Productions & shot by ace director and photographer, Bosco Christopher Bhandarkar and Rid Burman.

#### Brightcom Group appoints former Tata group executive as independent director

- Former Tata group executive Nilendu Chakraborty has been appointed as an independent director of Brightcom Group.
- Chakraborty has a vast experience of over two decades in the corporate finance and controls, especially in a leadership role of overseeing 1,000+ employees in multi-geography, multi-industry enterprises.
- Chakraborty is renowned for conceptualising, developing and executing new business lines.
- He is a natural with contract negotiations and building excellent client relationships in the ecosystem.

#### Senior White House official Catherine Russell appointed Executive Director of UNICEF

- On December 10, 2021, UN Secretary-General Antonio Guterres appointed Catherine Russell of the United States to become the next Executive Director of the UN Children's Fund (UNICEF).
- She will **succeed Henrietta Fore**, who resigned in July.
- She will become the **fourth woman** to head the agency of 20,000 personnel.

#### Radha Unni appointed as independent director of South Indian Bank:

- Radha Unni, former Chief General Manager, State Bank of India, Kerala Circle, has been appointed as Independent Director of the Kerala based lender, South Indian Bank.
- She brings to the table 36 years of banking experience.
- During her tenure in State Bank of India, Radha Unni had handled corporate credit and project appraisal of small and medium enterprises.
- Unni's other assignments included risk management at the corporate centre, **non-performing asset (NPA)**



management, business process re-engineering programme, transformational change management and capital market operations with the **SBI Capital Markets**, among others.

#### Indian-American political advisor Gautam Raghavan as the head of the White House Office:

- US President Joe Biden has elevated Indian-American political advisor Gautam Raghavan as the head of the White House Office of Presidential Personnel.
- White House Presidential Personnel Office (PPO), also written as Office of Presidential Personnel, is the White House office tasked with vetting new appointees.
- The PPO is one of the offices most responsible for assessing candidates to work at or for the White House.
- President Biden elevated **Raghavan**, who was currently posted as the PPO Deputy Director, to the key White House post after **UN Secretary-General Antonio Guterres** announced his intent to appoint **Cathy Russell as the next executive director of UNICEF**.
- Russell is currently the head of WH PPO.
- During the **Obama-Biden Administration**, Raghavan served in the **White House Office of Public Engagement** as liaison to the LGBTQ community as well as the Asian American & Pacific Islander community, as acting White House liaison for the US Department of Defence, and as Outreach Lead for the Pentagon's 'Don't Ask, Don't Tell' Working Group.

#### Mandiant Appoints Balaji Rao as Country Manager to Head India Operations

- Mandiant Inc, a Nasdaq-listed cyber security solutions company, has appointed Balaji Rao as the new country manager for India and SAARC (South Asian Association for Regional Cooperation) markets.
- Rao will be responsible for revenue generation, strategic business development, and operations.
- An industry veteran with over 25 years' experience Balaji will be spearheading the team to help organizations in India gain their cyber security advantage.

#### Arvind Kumar joins Software Technology Parks of India (STPI) as Director General

- Arvind Kumar, has been appointed as the director-general of the Software Technology Parks of India (STPI).
- Before joining STPI, Arvind Kumar was working in the Telecom Regulatory Authority of India (TRAI) in 2004.
- As an advisor in TRAI, he was responsible for broadband, data security and privacy issues, manufacturing, DTH, IPTV, TV broadcasting and OTT, after having worked since 1997 in the Indian Government-run premier technology center, C-DoT.

#### Indian Army Chief Gen Naravane takes charge as chairman of Chiefs of Staff Committee

- The government has appointed General MM Naravane, Chief of Army Staff, as the Chairman of Chiefs of Staff Committee (Chairman, CoSC).
- The post fell vacant following the death of the Chief of Defense Staff Gen Bipin Rawat in the IAF helicopter crash on December 8.
- The Chief of Indian Air Force V R Chaudhari and the Chief of Indian Navy Admiral R Hari Kumar took over their respective positions on September 30 and November 30, 2021.
- Note :
- General Rawat as the CDS had become the first permanent CoSC.
- CDS is the fourth and permanent member of the CoSC.

#### Hyundai appoints Unsoo Kim as new MD

- Hyundai Motor India (HMIL) Unsoo Kim has been appointed as the new Managing Director effective January 1.
- He will take up responsibilities from Seon Seob Kim who will lead a global role at Hyundai Motor Company headquarters, Seoul after his successful stint of three years in India
- During his tenure as the MD of HMIL, SS Kim has taken a multi-pronged approaches during his tenure including Hyundai's mobility strategy in India like transformation from an automobile brand to a Smart Mobility Solutions company.

#### SIAM appoints Vinod Aggarwal as new Vice President

- The Society of Indian Automobile Manufacturers (SIAM) its executive committee has elected
- **Vinod Aggarwal**, Managing Director and Chief Executive Officer, **Volvo Eicher Commercial Vehicles** (VECV) as its new Vice President for the current year 2021-22.
- VE Commercial Vehicles (VECV) is a joint venture between the Volvo Group and Eicher Motors.
- The change in Vice Presidentship has been done due to the resignation of Vipin Sondhi from his position at Ashok Leyland.
- Sondhi, MD and CEO, Ashok Leyland, served as the Vice President of SIAM from September 2020.

#### Piyush Somani named CCICI President

- The Cloud Computing Innovation Council of India (CCICI) appointed Piyush Somani, Chairman and Managing Director of ESDS Software Solution, as its President.
- **He succeeds Pamela Kumar as the President of CCICI**, an independent, not-for-profit body of professionals from industry, academia and government in the cloud computing space.
- The eight-year-old CCICI represents Indian interests in international cloud forums.
- It works for providing an open collaborative platform to accelerate the adoption and innovation of cloud

computing technologies in the country.

- The cloud sector has so much potential and with the help of right minds and dedication we can do ground-breaking work in the cloud technology sector in India as well as globally.

#### **Mohit Jain elected Indian Newspaper Society President**

- **Mohit Jain** of The Economic Times was elected as president of the **Indian Newspaper Society (INS)** president at its **82nd Annual General Meeting (AGM)** held through video conference.
- He succeeds Lakshmipathy Adimoolam of Health & The Antiseptic.
- While K. Raja Prasad Reddy (Sakshi) was elected the deputy president, Rakesh Sharma (Aaj Samaj) was the vice-president and Tanmay Maheshwari (Amar Ujala) was elected the honorary treasurer of the Society for 2021-22.

#### **Rishabh Pant appointed as Uttarakhand's brand ambassador**

- **Uttarakhand Chief Minister Pushkar Singh Dhami** announced that Indian wicket-keeper batsman **Rishabh Pant** has been appointed as the **brand ambassador** of the state.

**Aim :**

- To promote sports and create mental health awareness among the state's youth.

#### **Gabriel Boric becomes Chile's youngest ever president**

- On Dec 19, 2021, Leftist candidate 35-year-old Gabriel Boric won Chile's presidential election to become the country's youngest ever leader.
- **Boric won with 56% of the votes**, while his opponent 55-year-old **José Antonio Kast** trailed with **44%** of the votes.
- PEL appoints Rupen Jhaveri as Group President
- **Piramal Enterprises (PEL)** has announced the appointment of **Rupen Jhaveri as Group President**, with a primary focus on financial services.
- In the newly created role, Jhaveri will be responsible for business development, strategy, M&A, capital allocation and corporate finance.
- The appointment is effective January 24, 2022.
- He will join PEL from global investment firm KKR where he was a Managing Director at its India private equity team.
- PEL is extremely well positioned post **its ₹18,500 crore capital raise**, the recent DHFL acquisition and its significant focus to scale up its digitally led retail franchise.

#### **DRDO scientist Atul Dinkar Rane is the new DG for BrahMos Aerospace**

- The scientist of Defence Research and Development Organisation (DRDO) Atul Dinkar Rane has been

appointed as the new Chief Executive Officer and Managing Director of the BrahMos Aerospace Limited that manufactures the BrahMos supersonic cruise missile.

#### **PV Sindhu appointed BWF's Athletes' Commission member**

- India's two-time Olympic medallist shuttler PV Sindhu was appointed as a member of the Badminton World Federation's (BWF) Athletes' Commission.
- She was first elected as a member of the Badminton World Federation's (BWF) Athletes' Commission in 2017.
- Sindhu was the only BWF Athletes' Commission member standing for re-election, and received 120 votes from the 162 athletes who took part in the online election.
- The 26-year-old former world champion was named alongside five others who will serve as members till 2025.
- Six members of the BWF Athletes' Commission 2021-2025:
- Iris Wang (USA)
- Robin Tabeling (NED)
- Greysia Polii (INA)
- Kim Soyeong (KOR)
- Pusarla V Sindhu (IND)
- Zheng Si Wei (CHN)
- The Chair and Deputy Chair will be decided among the six members.
- The Chair of the BWF Athletes' Commission, following a vetting process as required for all Council members, will become a member of Council until the next elections in 2025.

#### **Pradeep Kumar Rawat To Be India's New Ambassador To China**

- Senior diplomat Pradeep Kumar Rawat has been appointed as India's next Ambassador to China.
- Mr Rawat is currently serving as Indian envoy to the Netherlands.
- He will succeed Vikram Misri.

#### **IFFCO-TOKIO General Insurance appoints HO Suri as MD and CEO**

- On Dec 22, 2021, Private sector IFFCO-TOKIO General Insurance appointed H O Suri as new managing director and Chief Executive Officer.
- The appointment is effective October 1, 2021.

#### **Justice SK Mishra Appointed As Acting Chief Justice Of Uttarakhand HC**

- The Centre notified the appointment of Justice Sanjaya Kumar Mishra as the Acting Chief Justice of the Uttarakhand High Court (as per Article 223 of the Constitution of India 1949) with effect from December

24.

- He was appointed following the retirement of Justice Raghvendra Singh Chauhan, Chief Justice, Uttarakhand High Court.
- Sanjaya Kumar Mishra is the senior most Judge of the High Court.
- The notification issued under the signature of Rajendra Kashyap, Additional Secretary, Union Ministry of Law and Justice, has been received in the Uttarakhand High Court.

#### Centre appoints Atul Kumar Goel as new MD & CEO of Punjab National Bank:

- 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.
- It maybe recalled that the Banks Board Bureau (BBB) had in September this year recommended the name of Atul Kumar Goel as MD & CEO of Punjab National Bank (PNB).
- He will serve as **MD & CEO of UCO Bank** till the date of attaining the age of **superannuation on May 31, 2023**.

#### RBL Bank MD & CEO Vishwvir Ahuja steps down

- RBL Bank's Vishawvir Ahuja has stepped down as MD & CEO of the bank, and the bank has appointed Rajeev Ahuja as the interim Managing Director and Chief Executive Officer of the bank with immediate effect.
- Further, the **Reserve Bank of India (RBI)** has appointed **Yogesh Dayal** as an **additional director** on the board of RBL Bank for a period of two years till 23 December 2023 or till further orders.

#### RBI appoints Yogesh Dayal as an additional director on RBL Bank's board

- The Reserve Bank of India (RBI) appointed Yogesh K Dayal, its chief general manager, as an additional director on the board of private lender RBL Bank for a period of two years.
- The appointment came into effect on December 24, 2021 & till December 23, 2023 or till further orders.
- It is conferred under Section 36 AB of the Banking Regulation Act, 1949.
- Dayal is a career central banker who has worked with the RBI in various capacities for over 25 years.
- He has held positions in the central bank's monetary policy department, as well as the departments related to banking supervision, information technology, currency management and payment and settlement

system besides financial inclusion and development.

#### Kamlesh Gandhi appointed Co-Chairman of FIDC

- Finance Industry Development Council (FIDC) has announced Kamlesh Gandhi, CMD of MAS Financial Services has been appointed as Co-Chairman, FIDC in addition to Umesh Revankar, CEO and MD of Shriram Transport Finance Group.
- These appointments were taken as **Sanjay Chamria resigned** as the Co-Chairman and Director, FIDC.
- **Dinanath Dubhashi**, MD and CEO, L&T Finance Holdings has been appointed as an **additional Director of FIDC**.

#### IAS Radhika Jha appointed CEO of Energy Efficiency Services

- Radhika Jha, Indian Administrative Service cadre 2002, has been appointed as the Chief Executive Officer in state-run Energy Efficiency Services (EESL).
- Among others, Ramesh Pallakonda, chairman of Rajasthan's power distribution company, and Harpreet Singh Pruthi, executive director at Indian Railways, were also in contention for the post.

#### Praveen Kumar appointed as DG & CEO of Indian Institute of Corporate Affairs (IICA)

- Govt of India has approved the appointment of Praveen Kumar, IAS (Retd.), to the post of Director General & Chief Executive Officer (DG & CEO), Indian Institute of Corporate Affairs (IICA).
- EaseMyTrip appoints Vijay Raaz and Varun Sharma as brand ambassadors
- EaseMyTrip, announced the appointment of ace actors Vijay Raaz and Varun Sharma as its brand ambassadors.
- This is the **first time EaseMyTrip has appointed any brand ambassadors** & also, this is the first time, when Vijay Raaz and Varun Sharma are coming together as a duo for any brand campaign.
- Equitas Small Finance Bank Limited board reappoints Vasudevan as MD, CEO for 3 years
- 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.
- He holds a Bachelor's Degree in Science (Physics) from University of Madras.
- He is a qualified Company Secretary from the Institute of Company Secretaries of India.
- He has extensive experience in the financial services sector.
- He worked for about two decades in Cholamandalam Investment and Finance Company Limited.
- He has also served as the Executive Vice President and Head of Consumer Banking Group in Development Credit Bank Limited, for more than one and a half years.
- He was also the Chairman of the Managing Committee of the South India Hire Purchase Association for



Fiscal 2006.

- He became **Managing Director of erstwhile Equitas Finance Limited**, now our Bank with effect from July 23, 2016.

#### Karl Nehammer was appointed as Chancellor of Austria.

- Karl Nehammer Austrian People's Party (ÖVP) was appointed as the Austria's chancellor by President of Austria, Alexander Van der Bellen, in a ceremony in Hofburg Palace, Vienna, Austria.
- He is succeeding the career diplomat **Alexander Schallenberg** who took charge as chancellor.
- He is the 3rd person to hold the role of Austria's Chancellor in the last two months.
- Karl Nehammer was previously served as the Interior Minister of Austria.

#### Diplomat Anupam Ray Appointed as India's Permanent Representative at UN Conference on Disarmament in Geneva, Switzerland

- **Senior diplomat Dr Anupam Ray** (1994 batch of Indian Foreign Service(IFS) officer) has been appointed as India's next permanent representative(PR)/Ambassador to the United Nations(UN) Conference on Disarmament(CD) in **Geneva, Switzerland**.
- He is now currently serving as the joint secretary in the Ministry of External Affairs(MEA).
- **He replaces Dr Pankaj Sharma** (1991 batch IFS officer) who has been serving as the Ambassador/Permanent Representative to the UN on Disarmament since 2018.

#### **CURRENT AFFAIRS: AWARDS AND HONOUR**

#### IFFI honours renowned lyricists Prasoon Joshi with 'Film Personality of the Year' Award

- Lyricist and CBFC Chairperson Prasoon Joshi was honoured with the 'Indian Film Personality of the Year' award at the 52nd International Film Festival of India (IFFI).
- "IFFI has been more than an award show, it has been a festival, veteran actress **Hema Malini received the similar honour**. The festival is being held in Goa.
- The award was conferred on him by the **Minister for Information & Broadcasting Shri Anurag Thakur**, for his contribution to cinema, popular culture and socially significant artistic work.
- Prasoon Joshi entered Indian cinema as **a lyricist in 2001 with Rajkumar Santoshi's Lajja**, and since then he has been a part of films like Taare Zameen Par, Rang De Basanti, Bhaag Milkha Bhaag, Neerja and Manikarnika, Delhi 6 and many more.
- Joshi is currently the Asia-Pacific Chairman of one of the world's largest advertising companies, McCann Worldgroup
- He has also won coveted international awards including Golden Lions at Cannes and Young Global leader by the **World Economic Forum**.

### Kerala based start-up wins two prestigious awards at National level

- A Kerala-based medical technology start-up has been adjudged the winner of Startup India Grand Challenge 2021 in the medical device category of the Government of India.
- **Sascan Meditech, the start-up incubated at the SCTIMST-TIMed the Technology Business Incubator** of Sree Chitra Tirunal Institute for Medical Sciences & Technology, Thiruvananthapuram, received a Cash grant of INR 15,00,000 at the **Grand Challenge** organized by Department of Pharmaceuticals, Govt of India along with **Startup India and Investindia.org**.
- The award was announced by **Mr. Amitabh Kant, CEO, NITI Ayog**, after a rigorous evaluation process, and “Sascan” was selected from among 310 start-ups which took part in the grand challenge.
- **Sascan, founded by Dr. Subhash Narayanan**, a scientist turned biomedical entrepreneur, focuses on developing affordable healthcare products and solutions for cancer care and screening based on biophotonics and allied technologies.
- It has also received Biotechnology Ignition Grant (BIG) from BIRAC and further NIDHI Seed support from the Department of Science & Technology, Government of India for developing **OralScan**.

### ITC chief Sanjiv Puri is 'Impact Person of the Year 2020'

- Sanjiv Puri, Chairman and Managing Director, ITC Ltd, was named the 'Impact Person of the Year 2020'. Smriti Irani, Minister of Women and Child Development, announced the winner, chosen from a wide field of business achievers.
- he is dedicating it to the farmers and rural communities with whom ITC has worked to create inclusive and sustainable growth.
- He emphasised that enterprises must serve a larger societal purpose as they pursue their economic agenda.
- Enterprises possess the innovative managerial capacity and financial resources to make a difference and contribute to inclusive growth for the country.

### Ratan Tata To Be Conferred Assam's Highest Civilian Award - Asom Bhaibav'

- On the occasion of Asom Divas, Assam Chief Minister Himanta Biswa Sarma conferred its highest civilian award 'Assam Baibhav' on Tata Trusts chairman Ratan Tata for his contribution to build cancer treatment facilities in the state.
- The Tata Trust, in collaboration with the Assam government, had decided to set up 19 cancer care units during the 'Advantage Assam – Global Investment Summit' in 2018 and an MoU had been signed between the Assam government and Tata Trusts.
- The board of trustees of Tata Trust had earlier informed the state government has approved Rs 540 crore

for setting up of a 3-level cancer care grid in the state and the district levels.

**Note:**

- The award was renamed as 'Assam Baibhav' by the Sarma-led government in September 2021. (Earlier known as 'Assam Ratna').

**V Praveen Rao wins 7th Dr. M.S. Swaminathan Award for 2017-19**

- V Praveen Rao, Vice-Chancellor of Prof. Jayashankar Telangana State Agricultural University (PJTSAU), has been selected for the Dr M S Swaminathan Award for the period 2017-19.
- The outstanding and innovative contributions of Praveen Rao in the areas of agricultural research, teaching, extension and administration won him the award," the award selection committee, headed by former ICAR Director General, RS Paroda.
- He handled 13 research and six consultancy projects in micro irrigation in India, Israel and South Africa.

**GUVI selects Indian Women's Cricketer Smriti Mandhana Signed as Brand Ambassador**

- GUVI, an Indian Institute of Technology Madras (IIT-M) incubated startup, selects Indian Women's cricketer Smriti Mandhana as its brand ambassador.
- As the brand ambassador of GUVI, Smriti Mandhana will be the face of GUVI and feature across the online campaigns of GUVI which aims to strengthen the importance and scope of technological education & information technology (IT) skills.

**Konkani writer Damodar Mauzo conferred with 57th Gyanpeeth Award**

- Renowned Konkani writer Damodar Mauzo has been conferred with 57th Gyanpeeth Award for the year 2022.
- Noted Assamese poet Nilmani Phookan has bagged 56th Gyanpeeth award for the year 2021.
- Mauzo is second Konkani writer to receive the highest **literary award**, earlier being given to Writer Ravindra Kelekar in 2006.
- Mauzo is short story writer, novelist and screenplay writer.
- His novel Karmelin had bagged Sahitya Akademi award in 1983.
- His several short stories are translated into other languages and have appeared in various magazines.
- Stories of Mauzo depict the struggle of poor people, their agonies and sorrows.

**BV Doshi becomes first Indian to win UK's top architectural award**

- Eminent Indian architect Balkrishna Doshi will be awarded the 'Royal Gold Medal 2022', one of the world's highest honors for architecture.
- This was announced by the Royal Institute of British Architects (RIBA).
- Doshi is the **first Indian** to win this award.

- The 94-year-old, who worked with Le Corbusier on his designs for the city of Chandigarh, was instrumental in defining the architecture of post-independence India.
- His designs combined modernist principles with a deep understanding of local vernacular traditions.

#### Indian Mathematician Neena Gupta wins 2021 Ramanujan Prize

- **Professor Neena Gupta**, a mathematician and faculty member of the t(ISI) was awarded the '**2021 DST-ICTP-IMU Ramanujan Prize for Young Mathematicians from developing countries**' for her outstanding work in affine algebraic geometry and commutative algebra.
- She has become the **fourth Indian** to win Ramanujan Prize for Young Mathematicians.
- Out of the four Indians who have been awarded this prize, three of them are faculty members of the Indian Statistical Institute.
- Also she is the third woman to receive the Ramanujan Prize which was first awarded in the year 2005 ( after Sujatha Ramdorai in 2006 & Carolina Bhering de Araujo in 2020).

#### India's Harnaaz Sandhu becomes Miss Universe 2021

- On Dec 12, 2021, the 21-year-old model Harnaaz Sandhu was crowned the Miss Universe 2021 at Universe Dome in Eilat, Israel.
- She was was representing India at the **70th Miss Universe 2021**
- Miss Universe 2021 Harnaaz Sandhu was presented the crown by Andrea Meza, former Miss Universe 2000 from Mexico.
- Meanwhile Paraguay's Nadia Ferreira, 22, finished second, South Africa's Lalela Mswane, 24, came third.
- With this win, she became the third Indian woman to be crowned Miss Universe.

#### Miss Universe from India:

Before Sandhu only two Indians have won the title of Miss Universe.

Winners Name	Year
Sushmita Sen	1994
Lara Dutta	2000

#### Elon Musk named Time Magazine's Person of the Year 2021:

- Tesla CEO Elon Musk has been named Time Magazine's "person of the year 2021".
- "For creating solutions to an existential crisis, for embodying the possibilities and the perils of the age of tech titans, for driving society's most daring and disruptive transformations, Elon Musk is our 2021 Person

of the Year

- **Musk, 50** is also the Founder and Chief Executive of space exploration company **SpaceX**.
- He also heads brain-chip start-up Neuralink and infrastructure firm **The Boring Company**.
- He recently surpassed Amazon Founder Jeff Bezos in terms of net worth to become the world's wealthiest person amid Tesla's rising share prices that pushed his net worth to **around \$300 billion**.

#### Seven-time F1 champion Lewis Hamilton receives knighthood at Windsor Castle

- Seven times Formula One champion Lewis Hamilton received his knighthood from Prince Charles at Windsor Castle for his services to motorsport at Windsor Castle, London.
- The 36 year old Lewis became just the **fourth F1 driver** to receive the honor after Sir Jackie Stewart in 2001, Sir Stirling Moss in 2000, and Sir Jack Brabham in 1979.
- He is the **only one** to have received the award while still racing.

#### Other active sportsmen who have received a knighthood :

- Bradley Wiggins (Cycling's Tour de France winner)
- Mo Farah (Olympic 5,000 and 10,000 meters gold medallist)
- Andy Murray (Tennis)
- Alastair Cook (England cricketer)

#### Bhutan confers highest civilian award on PM Modi

- On the occasion of 114th National Day of Bhutan (Dec 17, 2021) Prime Minister Narendra Modi has been conferred with the highest civilian award of Bhutan, Ngadag Pel gi Khorlo or Order of the Druk Gyalpo.
- PM Modi is the first foreign head of government to receive Bhutan's highest civilian award.
- The King of Bhutan, Jigme Khesar Namgyel Wangchuck, conferred honor on PM Modi for his outstanding contribution to bilateral relations and his services to the Bhutanese nation and people.

#### List of International Awards received by Narendra Modi:

- Order of Abdulaziz Al Saud (Saudi Arabia) - 2016
- State Order of Ghazi Amir Amanullah Khan (Afghanistan) - 2016
- Grand Collar of the State of Palestine Award (Palestine) - 2018
- Order of Zayed Award (United Arab Emirates) - 2019
- Order of St. Andrew award (Russia) - 2019
- Order of the Distinguished Rule of Nishan Izzuddin (Maldives) - 2019
- King Hamad Order of the Renaissance (Bahrain) - 2019
- Legion of Merit (United States) - 2020

**Note :**

- The 114th National Day of Bhutan which commemorates the Coronation of His Majesty the First King of Bhutan, Druk Gyalpo Ugyen Wangchuck on December 17, 1907.

#### Kumar Mangalam Birla named 'Global Entrepreneur of the Year'

- The Indus Entrepreneurs (TiE) based out of Silicon Valley awarded the Global Entrepreneur of the Year Award- Business Transformation to Mr Kumar Mangalam Birla, the Chairman of the Aditya Birla Group.
- The award was presented at the TiE Global Summit Awards ceremony held in **Dubai**.
- With this, he became the **first Indian industrialist** to receive this prestigious award.
- The awardees were selected by an independent jury chaired by venture capitalist **Tim Draper**, who founded the **Draper University**.

#### Note :

- The 2-day TiE Global Summit in Dubai was attended by policymakers, industry eagles and entrepreneurs from over 30 countries.

#### Other awardees :

- Elon Musk (Global Entrepreneur of the Year - Immigrant Entrepreneur)
- Jeff Bezos (Global Entrepreneur of the Year - First Generation),
- Satya Nadella (Global Entrepreneur of the Year - Entrepreneurial CEO).
- Techstars (Best Global Accelerator for Startups)
- MIT (Global University Promoting Student Entrepreneurship)
- Accel (Best Global VC Fund)

#### SAIL Receives Prestigious Golden Peacock Environment Management Award 2021

- The Steel Authority of India Ltd. (SAIL), under the Ministry of Steel has been awarded with the prestigious Golden Peacock Environment Management Award for the year 2021 in the Steel Sector by the Institute of Directors (IoD).
- SAIL received the award for **successive three years**.
- SAIL has been taking action for its efforts towards decreasing carbon footprint reduction, R&D initiatives, creation of carbon sinks, gradual shift to LED lighting, and enhancing the share of renewable energy.
- Note :
- Golden Peacock Awards, instituted by the IOD, India in 1991.

#### Avani Lekhara Bags 'Best Female Debut' Honor At 2021 Paralympic Awards

- Indian shooter **Avani Lekhara** won the "**Best Female Debut**" honor at the **2021 Paralympic Awards** for her record-breaking gold medal at the Tokyo Games.
- The awards were announced by the International Olympic Committee.



- She was also awarded **Major Dhyan Chand Khel Ratna**, India's highest sporting honour, for the achievement.

**Note :**

- India won an unprecedented **19 medals** at the Paralympic Games including **five gold, eight silver and six bronze**.

### Indian Climate Action Entrepreneur Divya Hegde Wins United Nations Women's Award For Leadership

#### Commitment

- Indian Climate Action Entrepreneur Divya Hegde from Udupi, coastal Karnataka, has won the UN Women's Award for Leadership Commitment at the 2021 Regional Asia-Pacific Women's Empowerment Principles Awards ceremony.
- She has been recognised for her sustained efforts in advancing gender equality through climate action efforts.
- Her organization, Baeru Environmental Services, works in the areas of waste management, creation of livelihoods for rural women, and developing a circular economy in the region.
- The award is a joint initiative of UN Women and the UN Global Compact aimed at empowering women to participate fully in economic life across all sectors.

**Aim :**

- To address the disconnect between the severity of the climate crisis and local coastal communities, while debunking myths related to climate solutions being seen as oppressive, unsustainable, and economically devastating for rural populations.

### Emma Raducanu wins BBC Sports Personality of the Year 2021

- The 19-year-old Emma Raducanu has won the BBC Sports Personality of the Year award 2021.
- She became the **first British woman** to win a Grand Slam singles title since Virginia Wade in 1977.
- Meanwhile, **Tom Daley**, who won a **gold** and a **bronze** medal at the Olympics earlier this year, came **second** in the BBC Sports Personality of the Year vote, while **Adam Peaty**, who won **two golds** in Tokyo, took **third** place.
- Tyson Fury, Raheem Sterling and Dame Sarah Storey were also nominated for the award.

**Note :**

Tom Daley won gold for the first time at his fourth Olympics in Tokyo.

#### Other award winners at Sports Personality 2021:

Awards	Winners
Helen Rollason Award	Jen Beattie
Coach of the Year	Gareth Southgate
Team of the Year	England men's football team
World Sport Star	Rachael Blackmore
Lifetime Achievement	Simone Biles
Unsung Hero	Sam Barlow
Young Sports Personality of the Year	Sky Brown

#### Bank of Baroda achieves top position in Digital Payments for 2020-21

- **Bank of Baroda** has won the number **one position** in overall digital transactions among large banks for **FY20-21**.
- To commemorate 75th anniversary of Independence of India, it was felicitated by the Ministry of Electronics & Information Technology (MeitY), Govt. of India at the Digital Payments Utsav.
- Bank of Baroda has been conferred with **five DigiDhan awards for FY 2019-20 & 2020-21** in various categories.
- The award was received by Akhil Handa, chief digital officer at Bank of Baroda, which was presented by Union minister for railways, electronics, and IT, Ashwini Vaishnav and MoS for electronics and IT Rajeev Chandrashekar.

#### IIT Roorkee Awarded First Position In Most Innovative Institutions Category by CII

- The Indian Institute of Technology (IIT Roorkee) has been awarded the top position under the most innovative research institutions category by the Confederation of Indian Industry (CII).
- In 2020, IIT Roorkee was adjudged as 'The Most Innovative Institute of the Year' for its innovation quotient
- The second and third positions were received by IIT Madras and Indian National Centre for Ocean

Information Services, Hyderabad (INCOIS), respectively.

- The awards were announced at the 27th DST-CII Technology Summit in the presence of Dr. Srivari Chandrashekhar, Secretary, DST, Government of India and Kris Gopalakrishnan, Past President, CII and Chairman, CII Industrial Innovation Awards.
- The following parameters define the innovation ecosystem:
  - Institutional strategies and research depth.
  - Innovation portfolios (sponsored research, IPR generation, translational research).
  - Initiatives by the institution to promote and champion innovation.
  - Innovation Impact (industry-academia partnership, international collaboration, technology transfer, societal impact, etc.)
- The IIT Roorkee was selected for the award for the following innovations- Visco-elastic Energy Dissipating Link Elements for Earthquake resistant housing construction, Nitrogen-Doped Reduced Graphene Oxide (N-rGO) for High-Performance Supercapacitor, Novel hybrid adsorbent for simultaneous removal of arsenic and fluoride from contaminated water .

#### **IBSi-Global Fintech Innovation Awards 2021 - Vayana Network and Federal Bank bag the 'Most Effective Bank-Fintech Partnership'.**

- Vayana Network and Federal Bank, a leading Private Sector Bank have been awarded the 'Most Effective Bank-Fintech Partnership: Agile and Adaptable' at the IBSi-Global Fintech Innovation Awards 2021.
- The award was conferred in recognition of Vayana Network's partnership with **Federal Bank**, for automating and simplifying Supply Chain Finance.
- Federal Bank partnered with Vayana Network to provide a seamless on-boarding experience to dealers through their unique 'Full Stack' tech infrastructure.
- The facilitates end to end digital solution including client supply chain account set up, monitoring, digital authentication of documents on the transaction platform and notification to customers at every step.
- It would help reduce complexities of supply chain financing and deliver tremendous value to our customers.

#### **JGU wins "Digital Innovation of the Year" at the Times Higher Education Asia Awards 2021**

- O.P. Jindal Global University (JGU) has won the "Digital Innovation of the Year" award at the distinguished Times Higher Education (THE) Asia Awards 2021.
- JGU was the **Only Indian University** to be Shortlisted for the "Digital Innovation of the Year"
- The winner in the Technological or Digital Innovation of the Year category, India's O.P. Jindal Global University, created a free, cloud-based application to help schools and universities manage data -

especially useful given India's digital divide."

- JGU's win at the THE Awards is a recognition of JGU's successful digital transformation and impact over the last 2 years.
- The university also translated (e)learnings into a detailed "Covid-19 Response-Toolkit for Indian Higher Education Institutions: Institutional Resilience for Academic Planning & Continuity".
- Tou, which is an amalgamated version of the internal software tools that JGU uses to operate the University online.
- It has enabled digital transformation of educational institutions across 12 states of India.

#### **Times Higher Education Awards Asia 2021 winners :**

- Leadership and Management Team of the Year - Kalinga Institute of Industrial Technology (KIIT)
- Workplace of the Year - Saint Joseph University of Beirut
- International Strategy of the Year - Hangzhou Dianzi University
- Teaching and Learning Strategy of the Year - National University of Singapore
- THE Data Points Social Impact Award - Institut Teknologi Sepuluh Nopember
- THE Data Points Improved Performance Award - University Utara Malaysia
- Excellence and Innovation in the Arts - Hong Kong Baptist University
- Technological or Digital Innovation of the Year - O.P. Jindal Global University
- Outstanding Support for Students - Universiti Teknologi Petronas
- Student Recruitment Campaign of the Year - Hanoi University of Science and Technology

#### ***HDFC Life wins 'Best Governed Company Listed Segment: Large Category' award***

- HDFC Life, one of India's leading life insurance companies, has been adjudged the 'Best Governed Company Listed Segment: Large Category' at the 21st edition of the ICSI National Awards for Excellence in Corporate Governance.
- The award was presented by Hon'ble Union Minister of Home Affairs and Minister of Cooperation, **Shri Amit Shah**.
- The eminent Jury was headed by the Hon'ble Shri Justice P. Sathasivam, Former Chief Justice of India, who evaluated numerous companies to choose the best governed company in Large, Medium & Emerging categories in both listed and unlisted segments.
- The awardees were selected through a rigorous and comprehensive six-step evaluation process that covered the evaluation of responses on various compliance and governance parameters.
- A further evaluation based on principles of good corporate governance was conducted.
- This was followed by a corroboration of the Independent Directors and the regulatory response confirming

the credentials of the company.

- Prior to final selection by the Jury, the screening of shortlisted companies was done by experts.

#### **HDFC Bank Wins Coveted CII Award for Most Innovative Best Practice**

- HDFC Bank has won the coveted CII Digital Transformation Award 2021 for 'Most Innovative Best Practice' for Financial Inclusion.
- The award was for HDFC Bank's efforts in furthering financial inclusion through partnership with **Government of India's Common Service Centers (CSC)**.
- HDFC Bank focuses on financial inclusion by offering entire bouquet of its world-class products through CSC's network of VLE centres.

#### **Greenman Viral Desai honored with 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 2021**.
- He was awarded the Bharat Gaurav Samman by the Culture Youth Institute at The Palm, Atlantis, in Dubai.
- **28 prominent personalities** from **11 countries**, including the UK, the US, New Zealand, France, and Malaysia, were felicitated with the prestigious awards on occasion.
- Some of the other awardees include motivational speaker Padma Shri Gaur Gopaldas, polo player Ashvini Kumar Sharma, Akshaya Patra Foundation's chairman Padma Shri Madhu Pandit Dasa, instrumentalist Padma Bhushan Pandit Vishwa Mohan Bhatt, Padma Shri Ramkishore Chhipa, Nirbhaya's mother Asha Devi, investor banker Saket Mishra, and others.
- Note :
- Viral Desai was the only one from India to have won the honour for climate action.

#### **Padma Bhushan Anil Prakash Joshi wins Mother Teresa Memorial Award 2021**

- Environmentalist Dr Anil Prakash Joshi, who was conferred upon the Padma Bhushan in 2021, has been awarded the Mother Teresa Memorial Award for Social Justice 2021.
- **Vidyut Mohan**, the winner of the **Earthshot Prize**, and **Ridhima Pandey**, a young environmental activist from Uttarakhand, were also the recipients of the award.
- The awardees were felicitated by Dr Abraham Mathai, the founder chairman of the foundation.
- Note :
- The Harmony Foundation hosted the 17th Mother Teresa Memorial Award for Social Justice 2021.
- The award identifies a theme and honors individuals and organizations who work to improve environmental sustainability.

### Key Notes :

- Dr Joshi was awarded for his efforts as a changemaker in the environmental sustainability sector by impacting over 10,000 villages in the Himalayan region through his Himalayan Environmental Studies & Conservation Organization.
- Vidyut was acknowledged for his seminal and ingenious efforts in combating air pollution through his social enterprise Takachar.

### Anukruti Upadhyay's Kintsugi wins the Sushila Devi Award 2021

- Anukruti Upadhyay has won the **Sushila Devi Award 2021** for the **Best Book of Fiction** for her critically acclaimed novel, **Kintsugi**, which was published under its prestigious Fourth Estate imprint.
- The Ratanlal Foundation and the organizing Committee of the Bhopal Literature and Art Festival announced the winner.
- This prize has been instituted by the Shri Ratanlal Foundation.
- Note :
- Previous winners have been Namita Gokhale (Things To Leave Behind), Shubhangi Swarup (Latitudes of Longing) and Avni Doshi (Girl in White Cotton).

### Alia Bhatt India's 2021 Person of the Year: PETA

- People for the Ethical Treatment of Animals (PETA) India has named Bollywood star Alia Bhatt its 2021 Person of the Year.
- Alia has been involved in animal welfare activities and regularly voices out the need for stronger animal protection laws.
- Alia also invested in Phool, the company behind Fleather, a vegan leather made from discarded temple flowers.
- Alia Bhatt is known to advocate support for cats and dogs and often uses her voice to call for stronger animal protection laws.

### 'Vaccine' - Merriam-Webster Word of the Year 2021

- Merriam-Webster, America's one of the most trusted online dictionary, has chosen **'Vaccine'** as the **2021 word of the year**.
- The word of the year is based on the data that states the significant increase in lookup at Merriam-Webster.com in the past 12 months.
- Lookups for the 'Vaccine' increased 601% year-over-year from 2020 and were up 1048% from 2019.
- Merriam-Webster dictionary's word of the year 2020 was **'Pandemic'**

### Ratan Tata conferred with 'Asom Baibhav Award' by Assam Government on Asom Divas



- On the occasion of Asom Divas or Assam Day, the Chief Minister of Assam Himanta Biswa Sarma conferred the prestigious 'Asom Baibhav' 2021 award to industrialist Ratan Tata, Chairman of TATA Trusts for contributing towards cancer care services in Assam.
- This is the highest civilian award of Assam.
- Assam day is celebrated on **2 December** to commemorate the rule of **Chalong Sukapha**.

#### Denmark's Viktor Axelsen and China's Taipei's Tai Tzu Ying named 2021 BWF Male & Female Player of the Year.

**Viktor Axelsen, Tai Tzu Ying** named Male and Female player of the year 2021 respectively by the **Badminton World Federation (BWF)**.

**Complete Winners list:**

Category	Name
Most improved player of the Year	Lee Yang and Wang Chi-Lin
Pair of the Year	Greysia Polii and Apriyani Rahayu
Para Badminton Pair of the Year	Lucas Mazur and Faustine Noel
Female Para Badminton Player of the Year	Leani Ratri Oktila
Male Para Badminton Player of the Year	Qu Zimo
Eddy Choong Most Promising Player	Kunlavut Vitidsarn
Special mention	Kevin Cordon

#### Fintech company Kinara Appoints Ravindra Jadeja as Official Brand Ambassador

- Indian cricketer Ravindra Jadeja becomes official brand ambassador of Bangalore based innovative, fast-growing fintech, Kinara Capital on the occasion of the company's 10th anniversary.
- Kinara Capital is one of the loan provider to India's MSMEs.

#### Indian Mobile Accessories manufacturer appoints Unix appoints Indian Cricket Jasprit Bumrah as its Brand Ambassador.

- Unix is an Indian Mobile Accessories manufacturing brand which has signed Indian Cricket Fast Bowler Jasprit Bumrah as its Brand Ambassador to increase visibility of their products.

#### Former Indian Cricketer Sunil Gavaskar honoured with SJFI Medal 2021

- The Sports Journalists Federation of India (SJFI) honoured Indian Cricketer and cricket commentator Sunil Manohar Gavaskar with its highest honour SJFI Medal 2021 at SJFI Annual General Meeting in Guwahati, Assam.

**Complete SJFI Awards list:**

Award	Winner
SJFI Sportsman of the year 2021	Neeraj Chopra(Javelin)
SJFI Sportswoman of the year 2021	Mirabai Chanu(Weightlifting)
SJFI Team of the Year 2021	Indian Men's Hockey team
SJFI Parathletes of the year 2021(Women)	Avani Lekhara(rifle shooter)
SJFI Special Recognition Award	Olympic Gold Quest(OGQ)
SJFI Parathletes of the year 2021(Men)	Pramod Bhagat (Badminton), Sumit Antil(Javelin)

### SAIL honored with Prestigious Golden Peacock Environment Management Award 2021

- The Steel Authority of India Limited (SAIL) honored with the prestigious Golden Peacock Environment Management Award (GPEMA) 2021 in the Steel Sector by the Institute of Directors (IOD).
- SAIL received this award for the **3rd consecutive year**.
- The Award is given to SAIL for significant achievements in Environment Management by Environment Foundation (WEF) since 1998.

### **CURRENT AFFAIRS: MOUS AND AGREEMENT**

#### DA and BVFCIREL sign MoU for Green Energy collaborations

- **Indian Renewable Energy Development Agency Ltd. (IREDA)** has signed Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) with **Brahmaputra Valley Fertilizer Corporation Limited (BVFCL)** for providing its techno-financial expertise in developing Renewable Energy projects and fund raising.
- The two companies are PSUs under Ministry of New & Renewable Energy and Ministry of Chemicals & Fertilizers respectively.
- The MoU was signed by Shri Pradip Kumar Das, Chairman & Managing Director (CMD), IREDA and Dr. Siba Prasad Mohanty, CMD, BVFCL in the presence of Shri Chintan Shah, Director (Technical), IREDA, Dr. R. C. Sharma, CFO, IREDA, and other senior officials.
- Under the MoU, IREDA will undertake Techno-Financial due diligence of Renewable energy, Green Hydrogen, Green Ammonia, Energy Efficiency & conservation projects for BVFCL.
- IREDA will assist BVFCL in developing an action plan to create and acquire Renewable Energy projects for the next 5 years.
- MD, IREDA while signing the MoU said that IREDA believes this collaboration will inspire other companies of Chemical & Fertilizer sector like BVFCL **to cut carbon emissions and being environment friendly**.
- It is a way forward for IREDA to play key-role for development of North-East India through Green Energy.

## Flipkart Inks MoU with Ministry of Rural Development Under National Rural Livelihood Mission

- A Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) between Ministry of Rural Development and Flipkart Internet Pvt. Ltd. to allow the **Self-Help Groups (SHGs)** producers including the artisans, weavers and craftsmen to access national markets through the Flipkart Samarth programme.
- The partnership is aligned with the DAY-NRLM's goal of strengthening the capabilities of rural communities for self-employment and entrepreneurship, thus providing further impetus to the Prime Minister's vision of an **"Atmanirbhar Bharat"**.
- This MoU is a part of the Flipkart Samarth program and aims to provide skilled yet under-served communities of craftsmen, weavers and artisans with national market access through the Flipkart marketplace, as well as dedicated support for knowledge and training.
- Flipkart Samarth seeks to break entry barriers for local communities by providing time-bound incubation and support with onboarding, cataloging, marketing, account management, business insights, and warehousing.

### The key features of MoU:

- SHG members and Clusters (geographical grouping of SHGs) will be provided training support for onboarding products.
- Waiver of all commission charges for selling on the platform for a period of 6 months.
- Cataloguing support for a maximum of 100 products per seller.
- Other benefits like support for warehousing and account management etc.
- The Ministry in collaboration with Government e-Marketplace (GeM) has created "Saras Collection " as a StoreFront in GeM for marketing of SHG products.
- The States of Assam, Bihar, Chhattisgarh, Gujarat, Himachal Pradesh, Jharkhand, Karnataka, Kerala, Madhya Pradesh, Maharashtra, Odisha, Punjab, Rajasthan, Uttarakhand, Uttar Pradesh & West Bengal have supported SHGs in registering on the GeM portal.
- The four States of Assam, Bihar, Kerala and Madhya Pradesh have developed e-commerce platforms to support SHGs; the details are provided below.

S.No	State	Name of Site
1	Assam	Asomi
2	Bihar	Jeevika Shop
3	Kerala	Kudumbashree Bazaar
4	Madhya	Madhya Pradesh Aajeevika

	Pradesh	Mart
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#### Oppo, IIT-Delhi sign MoU for scholarship programme:

- Aimed at strengthening its commitment towards empowering young minds of the country, Oppo India on Monday introduced the Genius+ programme to provide scholarships to outstanding students pursuing engineering courses at premium institutes.
- To start with the programme, the smartphone maker has signed a **memorandum of understanding (MoU) with IIT Delhi** to offer scholarships covering academics expenses **for the shortlisted students**.
- **Oppo will also be extending the programme for Masters** and PhD students to invest in the future of technological leaders in the industry
- The selection of first-year applicants for the Genius+ scholarship programme is based on the JEE rank of the students, and this will be further renewed for the second to **fourth year if the selected students have a minimum CPI (CGPA) of 8.0 or above**.

#### ONGC inks MoU with SECI to develop renewable, ESG projects:

- To realize its green energy objectives, Oil and Natural Gas Corporation Ltd (ONGC) has signed a Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) with Solar Energy Corporation of India (SECI).
- The MoU was signed by ONGC CMD Subhash Kumar and SECI MD Suman Sharma on behalf of the two national energy companies, 2 December 2021, **in New Delhi**.
- The MoU provides a broad, overarching framework for ONGC and SECI to collaborate and cooperate for undertaking renewable energy projects including solar, wind, solar parks, EV value chain, green hydrogen, storage, etc.
- ONGC, India's leading oil & gas company, has been pursuing green energy agenda through various alternatives and renewable sources of energy.
- It has set a target of producing a minimum of **10 GW of renewable power by 2040** while continuing its focus on the core E&P business.
- ONGC is first non-American company to be a part of Global Methane Initiative (GMI). Considering the strategic significance of CCUS technology towards transition to **Net-Zero Emissions**.
- The project will utilize CO2 captured from IOC's Koyali refinery for injecting in to the depleted reservoirs of **Gandhar oil field in Gujarat**.
- ONGC is also considering **India's first 200-300 MW demonstration** Wind offshore power project for which feasibility study is carried out jointly with NTPC Ltd.

#### IREDA and THDCIL sign MoU for Green Energy collaborations:

- To provide its techno-financial expertise in developing **Renewable Energy projects**, Indian Renewable Energy Development Agency Ltd. (IREDA) has signed a **Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) with THDC India Ltd (THDCIL)**.
- The MoU was signed by Shri Pradip Kumar Das, Chairman & Managing Director (CMD), IREDA and Shri Rajeev Kumar Vishnoi, CMD, THDCIL
- Under the MoU, **IREDA will undertake Techno-Financial** due diligence of Renewable Energy and Energy Efficiency & Conservation projects for THDCIL.
- IREDA will assist THDCIL in developing an action plan to create and acquire **Renewable Energy projects for the next 5 years**.
- IREDA will also extend its techno-commercial expertise to THDCIL for Environmental & Social (E&S) due diligence of RE projects as per the internationally accepted E&S standards.

#### **NMPB and CSIR-CIMAP Lucknow Signed MoU to promote the production of Medicinal Plants:**

- The National Medicinal Plants Board (NMPB) and the Council of Scientific and Industrial Research-Central Institute of Medicinal and Aromatic Plants, (CSIR-CIMAP), Lucknow signed an MoU for extending joint collaborative efforts to promote the production of quality planting material (QPM) of medicinal plants.
- The MoU will facilitate development of QPM of medicinal plants and herbs identified by NMPB and help in establishment of their nurseries for QPM development, **promotion, conservation and cultivation of the appropriate medicinal plants in different agro-climatic zones**.
- CSIR-CIMAP Lucknow, can also undertake research on mass multiplication, agro-technology development, Quality Planting Material generation of selected medicinal plants and herbs.
- During the tenure of MoU, NMPB will work through its implementing agencies i.e. **State Medicinal Plant Boards, State Horticulture Departments, Regional-cum-Facilitation Centres across India** in conjunction and collaboration with CSIR-CIMAP Lucknow and support projects related to QPM Development of Medicinal Plants Species.
- Working under the **Ministry of Ayush**, **NMPB is mandated to coordinate all matters relating to medicinal plants** and support Policies and Programs for growth of trade, export, conservation and cultivation of medicinal plants.

#### **Tata Power and IIT Madras signed an MoU, to work on R&D projects, tech solutions**

- Tata Power and Indian Institute of Technology Madras have entered into an agreement to collaborate in research and development, consultancy, policy advocacy, advisory, training, and commercialization of technologies and solutions.

- As a part of the MoU, Tata Power and IIT Madras will aim to pursue advanced research in areas of future technology.
- The agreement also includes campus recruitment opportunities to postgraduate students of IIT Madras
- A few objectives agreed upon by Tata Power and IIT M as a part of the tie-up are collaborative research projects including **research-based and consulting projects** supported by the **Center for Industrial Consultancy and Sponsored Research (IC&SR), IIT Madras**.
- The MoU provides for recruitment of IIT Madras graduates for full-time employment or as interns by Tata Power.
- This activity will be facilitated by the Placement Office, IIT Madras

#### **RIL's Jio-BP enters into MoU with Mahindra Group for RV products**

- **Reliance BP Mobility Limited (RBML)**, operating under the brand name **Jio-bp**, has entered into an MoU with **Mahindra Group** for exploring the creation of **EV products and services**, alongside identifying synergies in low-carbon and conventional fuels.
- The MoU also covers evaluating charging solutions by **Jio-bp for Mahindra** vehicles including **electric 3 and 4 wheelers, quadricycles and e-SCV** (small commercial vehicles – sub 4 tonnes).
- This would include captive fleets and last-mile mobility vehicles of Mahindra Group.
- The partnership aims at accelerating EV adoption in India with high-performance and swappable batteries that will help in dispelling range anxiety

#### **WhiteHat Jr ties up with Microsoft India to offer game-based coding courses**

- **WhiteHat Jr** has announced that it has collaborated with **Microsoft India** to provide students and teachers access to personalised and **immersive learning experiences with Minecraft**.
- The start-up will offer a Code with Minecraft course for students on its platform.
- As part of this collaboration, Microsoft will also help upskill WhiteHat Jr educators through special workshops delivered by the Minecraft Education Edition Teacher Academy.
- The Code with Minecraft course is available in multiple packages for **students aged 6-14 years**.
- Students start with game-based learning on Minecraft, where they can build their own game heroes, game worlds and play multiplayer games within **Minecraft's evolving environment, while learning foundational coding concepts such as commands, sequences, variables, loops and conditionals**.
- As students' progress through the curriculum, they will learn advanced coding concepts and languages.
- For years, Minecraft has fascinated children across the world and be able to collaborate with Microsoft India and bring such engaging learning experiences to children

#### **Samunnati Foundation partners IIT Madras Incubation Cell to support agri-startups**



- **Samunnati Foundation**, the non-profit subsidiary of Samunnati Financial Intermediation and Services Pvt Ltd has partnered **IIT Madras Incubation Cell (IITMIC)** to encourage innovative technologies in agriculture and allied areas, promote **agritech startups and sustainable agriculture**.
- The partnership will provide incubation support to entrepreneurial ventures, prepare position papers and propose policy recommendations.
- The key areas and technologies to be explored by the partnership include promotion of alternative crops like millets, adoption of green agricultural machinery, solar pumps, finance related technology products, electric vehicles for agri transport among others.
- Both entities will also focus on developing and promotion of food processing technologies and support services for agricultural community through enabling purchase and sale of produce, finance, insurance against price & weather fluctuations, agricultural advisories, transport & agricultural machinery hire and labour hire among others

#### **Airtel partners with Invest India for Startup Innovation Challenge**

- **Bharti Airtel (Airtel)**, has launched 'Airtel India Startup Innovation Challenge' in partnership with Invest India, inviting early-stage technology companies to demonstrate differentiated solutions areas like 5G, Cloud computing and **Internet of Things (IoT) and digital entertainment**.
- The top 10 winners will win cash prizes, get access to Airtel's Innovation Lab and will be able to leverage Airtel's advanced technology infrastructure to scale up their use cases and even co-innovate with Airtel's engineering teams,
- A select few of the 10 startups will be offered to be on-boarded onto the Airtel Startup Accelerator Program and hyper-scale their company with Airtel.
- Under this programme, startups gain access to Airtel's core platform strengths of data, distribution, network and payments.
- Further, startups get access to Airtel's global partner ecosystem and advisory from Airtel's executive team

#### **Adani Green Energy signs PPA with SECI:**

- Adani Green Energy Ltd (AGEL) has signed a power purchase agreement with the Solar Energy Corporation of India (SECI) to supply 4,667 MW of green power.
- The renewable energy unit of the diversified Adani Group the PPA is part of a manufacturing-linked solar tender of 8,000 MW awarded to **AGEL by SECI in June 2020**, which set a record for the world's largest solar development tender ever awarded.
- AGEL has signed PPAs with SECI for a total generation capacity of close to 6,000 MW, of the 8,000 MW awarded in 2020.

- The company expects to close the balance 2000 MW PPA in the next two to three months.

#### **Bharat Petroleum collaborates with Bhabha Atomic Research Centre for Green Hydrogen production:**

- **Bharat Petroleum Corporation Limited (BPCL)**, a 'Maharatna' and a Fortune Global 500 Company has collaborated with Bhabha Atomic Research Centre (BARC) to scale-up Alkaline Electrolyser technology for Green Hydrogen production.
- Presently, Electrolyser Plants are imported.
- This is a first of its kind initiative to support the country's commitment to achieve renewable energy targets and reduce greenhouse gas emissions.
- Refineries use large quantities of Hydrogen for de-sulfurization to make petrol, diesel and other chemicals. Currently, Hydrogen is made at the Refinery via. **Steam Reforming of Natural gas, but this results in high CO2 emission.**
- Therefore, Refiners are setting up large scale electrolyzers to produce Green Hydrogen from water and thereby decarbonize Hydrogen production.
- "BPCL is fully committed towards environment protection and ensuring a greener planet. We have been extensively leveraging technology in all our activities.
- This will be another step towards "Atmanirbhar Bharat" in our journey for achieving **Net Zero Emissions by 2040.**"
- Bharat Petroleum has plans to expand its portfolio of renewable energy with solar, wind and biofuels thereby reaffirming its commitment towards sustainability and reduction of carbon footprint.
- Furthermore, the Company intends to meet power requirement for new projects in its Refineries, primarily from renewable sources.

#### **Aditya Birla Fashion signs licensing agreement to sell Reebok products:**

- Marking its foray into the sports and activewear segment, **Aditya Birla Fashion and Retail Limited (ABFRL)** has announced the signing of a long-term licensing agreement with Authentic Brands Group (ABG) to distribute and **sell Reebok products through wholesale, e-commerce** and Reebok branded retail stores in India and other ASEAN countries.
- The sports and activewear segment are **expected to grow to \$13 billion by FY24** at an annual growth rate of **14 per cent**, according to the company.
- The proposed transaction is subject to the successful completion of due diligence, necessary statutory approvals and signing of definitive agreements.
- The transfer of ownership of the Reebok brand from Adidas to **ABG is expected to close in Q1 of 2022.**

#### JICA, TN sign pact to strengthen health sector:

- The Japan International Cooperation Agency (JICA) and Tamil Nadu's Health and Family Welfare Department have signed a Record of Discussions (RoD) for Prevention and Control of Non-Communicable Diseases in Tamil Nadu project.
- The project is expected to start from the **fourth quarter of FY21** to focus on strengthening the managerial and technical capabilities of health personnel with respect to NCD prevention and control.
- JICA has been supporting "**Tamil Nadu Urban Health Care Project**" to provide **25,537 million Japanese Yen (approximately ₹1,548 crore)** ODA loan to improve the quality of urban healthcare services by developing health facilities.
- JICA is also supporting the State government for "**The project for Covid-19 prevention capacity improvement**", focusing on technical cooperation around RT-PCR test provision in the State

#### An MoU was signed between the Department of Animal Husbandry & Dairying and the Bill & Melinda Gates Foundation:

- An MoU was signed between the Department of Animal Husbandry & Dairying and the Bill & Melinda Gates Foundation (BMGF) to collaborate in furtherance of their mutual objectives of sustainably improving the livestock sector to support India's food security and economic development agendas.
- As per MOU, the collaboration with Bill & Melinda Gates Foundation would provide technical assistance for the design and delivery of new technologies **and implementation of best practices that are relevant in the local context.**
- This engagement would support India's overall One Health framework and provide technical support for establishing the platform
- The MOU inter-alia states that the Scope of technical cooperation may be amended (added/deleted/modified) from time to time during the tenure of the MOU to accommodate for cooperation in new and emerging areas.
- To promote the dairy industry across the country **including the State of Gujarat**, the Department of Animal Husbandry and Dairying has been supplementing the efforts of States by implementing the following dairy development schemes:
  - National Programme for Dairy Development (NPDD)
  - Dairy processing and Infrastructure Development Fund (DIDF)
  - Supporting Dairy Cooperatives and Farmer Producer Organizations engaged in dairy activities (SDCFPO)

#### Ministry of Corporate Affairs and Financial Intelligence Unit-India sign MoU for data exchange between the two organizations:

- A formal Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) was signed between the Ministry of Corporate Affairs (MCA) and Financial Intelligence Unit-India, Ministry of Finance for data exchange between the two organizations.
- The MoU was signed by **Shri Manoj Pandey, Joint Secretary, MCA** and **Shri Manoj Kaushik, Additional Director FIU-India** in the presence of Secretary, MCA, and Director (FIU-India).
- The MoU is in line with the vision of MCA and FIU-INDIA to harness data capabilities to ensure effective enforcement.
- The data sharing arrangement gains significance in light of development of MCA21 Version 3 and FINNET 2.0 which will utilize state of the art technology for improving their regulatory and facilitating functions.
- **MCA is in process of rollout of MCA21 Version 3 in phases.** FIU-India is in the process of upgrading existing FINnet 1.0 to FINnet 2.0.
- **FINnet 2.0 project** is of national importance and assists FIU-IND by leveraging technology to collect, analyze and disseminate financial information for combating money laundering and related crimes with many improved and additional features to inculcate the **latest technologies like AI/ML and advanced data analytics to streamline the IT processes** with improved strategic data analysis capabilities and other aspects.
- The MoU comes into force from the date it was signed and **is an ongoing initiative of MCA and FIU-INDIA**, both of which are already collaborating through various existing mechanisms.
- **A Data Exchange Steering Group** also has been constituted for the initiative, which will meet periodically to review the data exchange status and take steps to further improve the effectiveness of the data sharing mechanism.
- The MoU marks the beginning of a new era of cooperation and synergy between the two organizations.

#### **Tata Steel has signed a pact for new rail line to Kalinganagar plant**

- Tata Steel has entered into a long-term agreement with **Angul Sukinda Railway (ASRL)** to invest **₹400 crore** for construction, operation, and maintenance of additional rail line to meet the logistic needs of **its Kalinganagar Steel plant**.
- Angul Sukinda Railway is a public limited company incorporated as a special purpose vehicle by the Ministry of Railways for developing, financing, construction, operation and maintenance of **a 104.24-km-long broad gauge single railway line between Angul and Sukinda in Odisha**.
- Tata Steel will fund the ₹400-crore expenditure in a phased manner by subscribing to 40 crore non-convertible, non-cumulative, redeemable preference shares of ASRL.
- The railway line provides direct link between iron-ore rich areas of Joda-Barbil in Odisha to steel and

sponge iron industries in the Angul region.

- It also connects coal mining region in Talcher to industries in Jakhapura, Joda-Barbil and areas in Kendujhar district, **Odisha**.
- Angul Sukinda Railway will meet Kalinganagar Steel plant logistics requirements for a period of **20 years**.

#### **Tata Motors signs MoU with Maharashtra to set up vehicle scrapping facility**

- **Tata Motors**, India's largest commercial vehicle manufacturer, has signed a **memorandum of understanding (MoU)** with the **Maharashtra government** to support setting up a registered vehicle scrapping facility.
- The proposed scrapping centre in Maharashtra will have the capacity to recycle up to 35,000 vehicles a year for end-of-life passenger and commercial vehicles.
- The MoU, which was signed through the Industries, **Energy and Labour Department**, was concluded at the Conference on **Investment Opportunities in Highway, Transport and Logistics in Mumbai**, in the presence of Minister of Road Transport and Highways, **Nitin Gadkari**, and other delegates
- Tata Motors had earlier signed a MoU with the Gujarat government for setting up a registered vehicle scrapping facility in Ahmedabad.

#### **Prasar Bharati signs MoU with ICCR to promote Indian Culture**

- **Prasar Bharati and Indian Council for Cultural Relations** signed a Memorandum of Understanding for promoting Indian culture.
- The performances of the eminent artists associated with the **Indian Council for Cultural Relations (ICCR)** will be telecast on the national and International Channels of Door darshan
- The dance and music performances will be showcased on DD National, DD India, regional channels of Door darshan and Prasar Bharati News Services in the form of a weekly programme.
- The MoU aims to bring forth the best of Indian Culture to the National and International audiences and provide TV and Digital platforms to the performing artists.
- In collaboration with ICCR, Doordarshan will produce 52 half an hour episode, based on cultural events/concerts/performances of music/dance organized by ICCR.
- The MoU was signed between Shri **Mayank Kumar Agrawal**, Director General, Doordarshan and Shri **Dinesh K Patnaik**, Director General, Indian Council for Cultural Relations in the presence of Shri Shashi Shekhar Vempati, Chief Executive Officer, Prasar Bharati, Shri **D P S Negi, Member (Finance), Prasar Bharati** and other senior officers from Prasar Bharati and Indian Council for Cultural Relations.
- This MoU will be in operation for the period of three years from December 2021 till December 2024.

### MapmyIndia, MoRTH, IIT Madras Sign MOU To Make Road Travel Safer

- A series of MoUs has been signed during the National Conference on Investment Opportunities in Highway, Transport and Logistics, held in Mumbai, Maharashtra under the chairpersonship of Union Minister for Road Transport and Highways Shri Nitin Gadkari.
- MoU signed for setting up of Multi-Modal Logistics Parks (MMLPs) at five strategic locations in Maharashtra: Mumbai Metropolitan Region, Pune, Aurangabad, Nashik and Dighi Port Industrial Estate.
- The MoU has been signed among National Highways Logistics Management Ltd (NHLML), Maharashtra Industrial Development Corporation (MIDC) and Rail Vikas Nigam Ltd (RVNL).
- MIDC will provide land for development of MMLPs, NHLML will provide external road connectivity to the site and RVNL will provide external rail connectivity to the site.
- The MMLPs have been conceptualized to enable seamless intermodal freight movement and offer multiple functionalities such as freight aggregation and distribution. Storage and warehousing solutions and value-added services such as custom clearances and IT services will also be provided to users.
- The parks will enable the shift from a point-to-point to a hub-and-spoke model in the logistics sector, eventually helping us bring down logistics costs by at least half and enabling more efficient movement of new-generation vehicles.

### MoU signed between Government of Maharashtra and Tata Motors for setting up of Vehicle Scrapping Facility in Maharashtra

- This MoU will ensure unfit and polluting vehicles in Maharashtra are scrapped in an environment-friendly and sustainable manner.
- MoU between Government of Maharashtra and CERO, India's first organized vehicle recycler, for setting up additional Vehicle Scrapping Facilities in Maharashtra
- The scrapping facilities are being set up under the government's Voluntary Vehicle-Fleet Modernization Policy, which aims to create an ecosystem for phasing out unfit and polluting vehicles.

#### Aim :

- To reduce pollution by scrapping more than 1 crore unfit vehicles, improve road and passenger safety, boost auto sales, improve fuel efficiency, formalize scrappage industry and boost availability of low-cost materials for the industry.
- Under the policy, around 50-70 Registered Vehicle Scrapping Facilities (RVSFs) will be set up across the country during the next 5 years.

### 4. MoU signed among Ministry of Road Transport & Highways, IIT Madras and MapmyIndia

- The MoU is to minimize accidents and deaths by road accidents by marking high-frequency accidents and



safe navigation zones.

- The app will provide navigation app surveys which will provide road safety alerts and upcoming accident hazards to the users while driving.
- The app will give alerts regarding mapping navigation.
- It has won the Government of India's Atma Nirbhar App Innovation Challenge in 2020.

#### **Skill Lync partners with AMTZ for course in medical technology**

- Skill Lync joined hands with Andhra Pradesh MedTech Zone (AMTZ) to launch a masters coursework in Medical Technology.
- The partnership addresses the skill gap in the medical devices industry, having a massive shortage of design engineers and researchers.
- The '**Executive Master in Medical Technology**' programme by Skill-Lync will span 12 months, and will include nine fundamental courses and a specialisation.
- Students will also receive on-the-job training by interning with a medical device manufacturing company on AMTZ campus

#### **REC signs agreement with KfW Development Bank to finance Power Sector and Renewable Energy Projects:**

- **REC Limited** has entered into an agreement with **KfW Development Bank** for availing ODA term loan of **USD 169.5 million under Indo-German Bilateral Partnership** in accordance with the approval granted by Department of Economic Affairs, Ministry of Finance, Govt. of India.
- Proceeds of ODA loan will be deployed for part financing of innovative **Solar PV Technology** based generation Projects in India at competitive interest rates.
- This is the fifth credit line signed between REC Limited and KfW for financing of Power Sector Projects and third credit line for financing of Renewable Energy Projects.
- REC is continuously re-shaping its policies to align with market requirements and developing financial solutions and mechanisms that create scalable and effective ways of channelizing both Private and Public investments in the Renewable Energy space.
- As a testament to this, REC offers the lowest interest rates to renewable energy sector among all the segments being financed by the corporation.

#### **BelfricsBT MoU with Chennai City Football Club:**

- Blockchain platform BelfricsBT has announced that it has signed an MoU with Chennai City Football Club and KPR Info Solution to develop a first-of-its-kind hybrid blockchain solution for sports persons and club management.
- Belfrics is one of the **leading global blockchain technology firms** and cryptocurrency exchanges focussed

on making the cryptocurrency technology effortless and accessible to all.

- BelfricsBT is the blockchain technology division of Belfrics.
- BelfricsBT will work with CCFC, which will be the knowledge partner and first adaptor of the solution.
- With this business inputs, BelfricsBT will architect the blockchain solution as the technology partner.
- Sports clubs have seen a tremendous rise in India over the past five years with billion-dollar leagues in football, cricket and kabaddi.
- The global sports ecosystem open for blockchain adoption is **valued at \$22 billion as of 2021** of which India has a **market share that is worth \$796 million** and we are looking at disrupting this sector with the help of our innovative blockchain solution

#### **ITC collaborates with Invest India to support start-ups for sustainable packaging and waste management solutions:**

- **ITC Paperboards and Specialty Papers Division (PSPD)** has collaborated with **Invest India** to launch the '**ITC Sustainability Innovation Challenge**' to support innovative start-up ideas on sustainable packaging and smart waste management solutions.
- It will enable ITC-PSPD to leverage on the country's "**rich start-up repertoire**" as well as provide support to the start-up ecosystem.
- **ITC PSPD is inviting responses from startups for challenges** laid out by the Company to find sustainable and smart technology-based solutions that can substitute single-use plastics and automate the waste segregation process to improve efficiency and speed.
- **ITC Sustainability Innovation Challenge'** will enable the company to crowdsource out-of-the box ideas for **phasing out single-use plastics by 2022 in collaboration with Invest India.**

#### **NIPL & Western Union sign MoU to establish Real-time Cross-Border Transactions**

- NPCI International Payments Limited (NIPL), international payments arm of National Payments Corporation of India (NPCI) signed a Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) with Western Union to start real-time bank account payout in India.

### **CURRENT AFFAIRS: SUMMITS & CONFERENCES**

#### **Tribes India Conclave organised by TRIFED and Ministry of Ext**

- A Tribes India Conclave is organised in association with TRIFED and the Ministry of External Affairs at the "Tribes India Adi Mahotsav".
- It was arranged in line with the Prime Minister's vision for Vocal for Local to build a self-reliant India and introduce rich tribal heritage to international audiences.
- The event was attended by around 100 diplomats from more than 20 foreign missions in India besides

senior officials from the Ministry of External Affairs and other ministries.

- The dignitaries included diplomats from over 20 countries such as Poland, Kiribati, South Korea, Mexico, Thailand, Laos, Switzerland, Bangladesh, Maldives, US and Brazil.
- The dignitaries took a look at the stalls of the tribal artisans from across the country and showed their keenness to learn more about the unique handicrafts and traditions.
- With about 200 stalls on display which showcase products ranging from traditional weaves to jewellery and paintings and toys, the dignitaries were given a glimpse into tribal arts and crafts.
- In addition, there were live demonstrations by artisans on how to make pottery, Lac bangles and Gond paintings.
- Throughout the conclave, a unique GI store also emphasised distinguished, delicate items like Darjeeling tea from West Bengal, Kota Doriya fabric, Rajasthan's blue pottery, Kala jeera from Himachal Pradesh, Odisha's Pattachitra, Madhya Pradesh's Chanderi & Maheshwari silk, Karnataka's Bidriware, Banarasi silk from Uttar Pradesh.
- Tribal artisans also performed a live puppet show at the event.

#### India-ITU Joint Cyberdrill 2021

- The Department of Telecommunications (DoT) and International Telecommunication Union (ITU) have commenced India-ITU Joint Cyberdrill 2021 starting from 30 November to 3 December 2021 virtually.
- Aim:
- To improve the **cyber security readiness** of India & also, to improve the protection and incident response capability of the country.
- This Cyberdrill is intended for Indian entities especially Critical Network Infrastructure operators.
- The inaugural session of the joint cybersecurity exercise was attended by high-level speakers, panelists, and experts from the ITU, United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime (UNODC), INTERPOL, National Security Council Secretariat (NSCS), Indian Computer Emergency Response Team (CERT-In), and other Organizations.
- Ms Atsuko Okuda, Director of ITU Regional Office, Asia and Pacific Region highlighted the significant achievement of India in securing 10th rank in the ITU Global Cybersecurity Index (GCI).
- More than 400 participants participated from critical sectors, namely, power, insurance, finance, CERT-In and CSIRT, industry, academia, telecom service providers and field units of DoT.

#### ***Benefits of India – ITU Joint Cyber Drill :***

- The drill emphasized the role of Computer Security Incident Response Team and **Computer Incident and Response Team (CIRT)**.

- The CIRT is responsible for handling security breaches
- It also strengthened India's capability in protecting critical information infrastructure and building cyber resilience.

#### Dr Mahendra Nath Pandey to be the Chief Guest at the Round Table Conference

- Dr Mahendra Nath Pandey, Union Minister of Heavy Industries will be the Chief Guest at the Round Table Conference to Promote Electric Vehicles organized by Ministry of Heavy Industries (MHI) on December 4, 2021 at Goa.

#### Aim:

- To work out strategies to promote adoption of Electric Vehicles in India and attract investment in manufacturing of EVs, batteries and high technology automotive components in India.

#### Policy Initiatives to increase EV penetration:

- Faster Adoption and Manufacturing of Electric Vehicles in India II (FAME India II) scheme (outlay of Rs 10,000 crore)
- National Programme on Advanced Chemistry Cell (ACC) (outlay of Rs 18,100 crores)
- Productivity Linked Incentive (PLI) scheme for Automobile and Auto Components (outlay of Rs 25,938 crore)

#### NMCG and c-Ganga organize 6th India Water Impact Summit

- The National Mission for Clean Ganga (NMCG) alongwith the Centre for Ganga River Basin Management and Studies (c-Ganga) are organizing the 6th edition of the India Water Impact Summit (IWIS) from 9th December to 14th December 2021.
- The summit is being organized in a hybrid mode - online and physically at the NMCG office, **New Delhi and IIT, Kanpur.**
- The IWIS 2021 is a five-day event and this year's theme is 'River Resources Allocation "Planning and Management at the Regional Level.
- The Summit will be inaugurated by **Shri Gajendra Singh Shekhawat**, the Hon'ble Minister of Jal Shakti.

#### Focus of the Summit:

- To synchronize river conservation with long term developmental needs by river resource budgeting.
- The summit has various sessions on Science, Technology & Policy, Finance and Economics, Technology & Innovation, International and Policy, Law & Governance.
- The plenary session will majorly focus on River Resources Allocation - Planning and Management at the Regional Level by including upper, middle, lower, and deltaic regions on each day respectively.

- The IWIS 2021 will provide a knowledge enriching platform to all stakeholders and aim to discuss, debate and develop the model solutions for some of the important challenges before not only Ganga but all rivers and the water sector in India.
- It would be in collaboration with the European Union, Denmark, Netherlands, Norway, USA, UK, Australia and the BRICS countries.

**Note:**

- The **5th edition of the India Water Impact Summit (IWIS)** was successfully organized by the NMCG and c-Ganga on the theme of comprehensive analysis and holistic management of local rivers and water bodies with the focus on Arth Ganga - River Conservation Synchronized Development.

**Objective:**

- To reduce pollution and ensure rejuvenation of the Ganga River.
- Director General: Rajiv Ranjan Mishra

**PM Modi attends democracy summit**

- Prime Minister Narendra Modi attended the closed-door session of the first Summit for Democracy.
- PM Modi was invited to participate in the main Leaders' Plenary Session **hosted by US President Joe Biden**.
- This closed-door session saw interventions from 12 select countries, including India.
- The second Leaders' Plenary Session was hosted by the President of the European Commission, Ursula von der Leyen

**AIM NITI Aayog, & Embassy of Denmark launches 2nd edition of water innovation challenges**

- On Dec 13, 2021, Atal Innovation Mission, NITI Aayog and the Royal Embassy of Denmark to India announced the second edition of water innovation challenges to address the global water woes through innovations as part of the Indo-Danish Bilateral Green Strategic partnership.
- The collaboration will provide solutions to improve sustainable water supply in India and at the global level.

**Aim:**

- To identify innovative & next-gen solutions to solve proposed challenges in collaboration with corporate and public partners.
- The initiative will engage young talents from leading universities and innovation hubs across the nation to build their skills and apply their technical disciplines and innovation capacity.
- The winners of the challenges will also represent India at the International Water Congress 2022.
- The Denmark Embassy in India, and the DTU will be preparing the Indian participants for the Global Next Generation Water Action (NGWA) program to be hosted by DTU.

### Second edition of 'Animal Husbandry Startup Grand Challenge' launched

- To commemorate the birth anniversary of **Dr. Varghese Kurien**, The Department of Animal Husbandry and Dairying, in partnership with **Startup India**, launched the second edition of 'Animal Husbandry Startup Grand Challenge' at an event celebrating 'National Milk Day' in **Anand, Gujarat**.
- Aim:
- To scout for innovative and commercially viable solutions to address **six problems** faced by the animal husbandry and dairy sector.
- The first edition of the startup grand challenge was launched by Prime Minister, Shri Narendra Modi, on 12th September, 2019.
- The six problem areas are:
  - Cost-effective, Long-term, and User-friendly Alternatives for Storage and Supply of Semen Doses
  - Development of Cost-effective Animal Identification (RFID) and Traceability Technology
  - Development of Heat Detection Kits
  - Development of Pregnancy Diagnosis Kits for Dairy Animals
  - Improvement of existing milk supply-chain from village collection centre to the dairy plant
  - Development of Low-cost Cooling and Milk Preservation System and a Data Logger
- For each of the six problem areas, a winner will be awarded Rs 10 lakh and a runner-up with Rs 7 Lakh each as cash prizes.

### PM Modi to address National Summit on Agro and Food Processing

- On Dec 16, 2021, Prime Minister **Shri Narendra Modi** will address the farmers during the valedictory session of the **National Summit on Agro and Food Processing in Anand, Gujarat** via video conferencing.

### India hosts 8th Indian Ocean Dialogue

- India hosted the 8th Edition of the Indian Ocean Dialogue virtually.
- **Theme** of the edition : 'Post Pandemic Indian Ocean: Leveraging Digital Technologies for Health, Education, Development and Trade in IORA Member States'.
- The eighth Indian Ocean Dialogue (IOD) is hosted by Indian Council for World Affairs (ICWA), the Ministry of External Affairs and the Indian Ocean Rim Association (IORA).
- Aim of the Dialogue :
- To trigger cooperation among IORA Member States in the field of digital technologies while ensuring digital inclusion and bridging the digital divide.
- It highlights new digital needs and innovative approaches for harnessing these technologies for achieving the UN 2030 Agenda and its Sustainable Development Goals.



**Note :**

- The 7th edition of Indian Ocean Dialogue was hosted by the United Arab Emirates and held virtually on 2-3 February 2021 around the theme 'Fostering a New Era of Cooperation in the Indian Ocean'.

**Technical Conference cum Exhibition on 24x7 Water Supply Systems held**

- The Union Ministry of Housing and Urban Affairs (MoHUA) organised a technical conference-cum-exhibition here to disseminate knowledge on the planning, design, implementation, operation and maintenance of 24x7 water supply systems.
- The event was organized by the Central Public Health and Environmental Engineering Organisation (CPHEEO).
- The conference was attended by Technical Heads, Chief Engineers, City Engineers & senior engineers dealing with water supply in all the 500 AMRUT cities, PHEDs/Corporations/Boards/Jal Nigams, Experts, PPP partners, manufacturing firms, consultants.

**Union Ministers Hardeep Singh Puri & Dr. Jitendra Singh attends first ever 'J&K Real Estate Summit- 2021**

- Minister of Housing and Urban Affairs and Petroleum and Natural Gas Shri Hardeep Singh addressing the first ever 'Real Estate Summit- 2021' at Convention Centre, Jammu.

**Purpose :**

- To encourage people from across India to invest in real estate and property in Jammu and Kashmir.
- The Summit is organized by the Department of Housing & Urban Development Department, Government of Jammu and Kashmir in collaboration with the Ministry of Housing and Urban Affairs, Government of India.

**Key People :**

- Chief Secretary J&K, Sh. Arun Kumar Mehta, Vice Chairman NAREDCO, Dr. Niranjana Hiranandani, President NAREDCO, Sh. Rajan Bandelkar, Principal Secretary, Housing and Urban Development Department JK, Sh. Dheeraj Gupta, Mayor Jammu, Sh. Chander Mohan Gupta, Mayor Srinagar, Sh. Junaid Matoo besides senior officers of UT and Central Government & delegates from many states were also present in the summit.
- During the summit, Shri Hardeep Singh Puri e-launched 'Auction of Assets Portal', Affordable Rental Housing Complexes Scheme at Sunjwan, Jammu, J&K RERA portal, Housing Schemes and J&K Housing Mission Portal.
- During this, 39 memorandum of understandings (MOUs) were signed, & many MoUs were exchanged between NAREDCO National & NAREDCO J&K Chapter, NAREDCO & LEAD, NAREDCO & NAR,

NAREDCO & J&K Housing and Urban Development Department, JK Industry & Commerce Department and Haldiram and JK Housing Board & Central Government Employees Welfare Housing Organization.

### CURRENT AFFAIRS: DEFENCE NEWS

#### India, Sri Lanka, Maldives Conduct Joint Exercise On Maritime Security

- The ships and aircraft of the Indian Navy participated in the first-ever Colombo Security Conclave (CSC) Focused Operation to enhance maritime security in the Indian Ocean region, along with Sri Lanka and the Maldives.
- The two-day conclave witnessed the participation of ships and aircraft of the Indian Navy (IN), Maldives National Defence Force (MNDF) and the Sri Lankan Navy (SLN).
- They operated over a vast area in the **Exclusive Economic Zones (EEZ)** of the three countries in the Southern Arabian Sea.
- Aim:
- The 'CSC Focused Operation' was conducted with an aim of keeping this vital part of the Indian Ocean Region safe and secure for commercial shipping, international trade and conduct of legitimate maritime activities.
- The CSC Focused Operations are aimed at streamlining **Standard Operating Procedures (SOPs)** and enhanced interoperability amongst the three navies.
- It would help build understanding and interoperability between the lead maritime security agencies, and facilitate institution of measures to prevent and suppress transnational crimes in the region.
- It would further enhance the operational synergy by exchange of information and conduct of coordinated operations to handle maritime incidents/ accidents
- A trilateral Tabletop Exercise (TTX) between IN, MNDF and SLN was conducted on 14 and 15 July 2021.
- The three countries had participated in the 5th Deputy National Security Advisors (NSA) – level meeting of Colombo Security Conclave on 04 August 2021, wherein ways of enhancing maritime security cooperation in the Indian Ocean Region were deliberated upon.

#### Russian navy test-fires hypersonic missile in the White Sea

- **Russia's navy** has successfully **test-fired** a prospective hypersonic missile **Zircon cruise missile** in the White Sea.
- The Admiral Gorshkov launched the Zircon cruise missile, hitting a practice target 400 kilometres (215 nautical miles) away.
- The launch was the latest in a series of tests of Zircon, which is set to enter service in 2022.

#### India to develop jet engines for aircrafts with foreign collaboration

- **India** is set to develop jet engines for aircrafts like **Light Combat Aircraft (LCA)** in association with the **International Engine House**.
- It is proposed to develop indigenous engines for powering aircraft such as LCA variants and **Advanced Medium Combat Aircraft (AMCA)**.
- LCA Tejas, Flight Operational Clearance (FOC) configuration demands higher thrust than the intended engine requirement.
- Hence the Kaveri in the present architecture cannot be integrated.
- In order to induct with LCA Tejas, a modified engine version is required.
- The technological capabilities built through the Kaveri engine project will be utilised.
- The LCA FOC variant and the Mk1A are powered by the GE-F404 engines while the LCA-Mk2 and AMCA in future will initially be powered by the more powerful GE-F414 engines.

#### Indian Bio-Jet Fuel Technology Receives Formal Military Certification

- **CSIR-IIP Dehradun's** home-grown technology to produce **bio-jet fuel** has been formally approved for use on military aircraft of the **Indian Air Force (IAF)**.
- The technology, **developed** by the **Indian Institute of Petroleum (CSIR-IIP)**, a constituent laboratory of the Council of Scientific and Industrial Research.
- It has undergone evaluation tests and trials over the **last three years**.
- The provisional clearance (PC) certificate was handed over by Shri R.Kamalakaran, Group Director(AT&FOL), Centre for Military Airworthiness and Certification (CEMILAC) to Mr Saleem Akhtar Farooqui, Principal Scientist from CSIR-IIP.
- This certification represents India's growing confidence in the aviation biofuel sector.
- The testing of airborne items is a complex and meticulous process involving intricate checks while ensuring the highest levels of flight safety.
- The clearance will enable Indian armed forces to use bio-jet fuel produced using indigenous technology across all its operational aircraft.
- This will also enable early commercialization of the technology and its mass production.
- Bio-jet fuel can be produced from used cooking oil, tree-borne oils, short gestation oilseed crops grown off-season by farmers and waste extracts from edible oil processing units.
- On Jan 19, an AN-32 aircraft, filled with blended bio-jet fuel, had flown over RajPath at New Delhi during the Republic Day celebrations.
- The fuel was also used on a civil, commercial demonstration flight operated by SpiceJet on 27 Aug 18 from Dehradun to Delhi.

### Bangladesh, U.S. Kick Off bilateral maritime exercise CARAT

- Bangladesh Navy (BN) and the US military personnel **kicked off the** annual Cooperation Afloat Readiness and Training (CARAT) **maritime exercise in the** Bay of Bengal **Virtually**.
- The nine-day engagement focuses on a full spectrum of naval capabilities and features Cooperative activities that highlight the ability of US and Bangladesh to work together toward the common goal of ensuring a free and open Indo-Pacific.

#### Objective:

- To enhance regional cooperation and build relationships and strengthen professional skills.
- **Bangladesh Navy** has been taking part in the CARAT exercise since 2011.
- The exercise will involve complex at-sea training to demonstrate their ability to work together through numerous events.
- Other focus areas include surface warfare, replenishment-at-sea, search and rescue, a gunnery exercise, and exchanges between Explosive Ordnance Disposal technicians.

### BDL sign Rs 471.41-crore contract with Indian Army

- Bharat Dynamics Limited (BDL) had signed a Rs 471.41-crore contract with the Indian Army for the refurbishment of IGLA-1M missiles.
- The refurbishment will increase the life of the missiles by **10 years**.
- The Company, in addition to carrying out refurbishment, deals with manufacture and supply of Guided Missiles and associated equipment, Underwater Weapon Systems, Airborne Weapon Systems, Ground Support Equipment and product life cycle support.
- In order to give momentum to its efforts towards self-reliance, BDL has also built-up its in-house R&D capabilities primarily focussing on design & engineering activities.
- The Company is leveraging emerging technologies like Artificial Intelligence to develop futuristic weapons for the Armed Forces.

### 'Indian Army Receives New Israeli Heron Drones For Deployment In Ladakh'

- The **Indian Army's surveillance capabilities** have received a major boost as **Israel** has delivered advanced **Heron drones** under the emergency procurement clause to keep an eye on the Chinese activities in the **Ladakh sector**.
- Features of Heron drones:
- The Israel-manufactured Heron drones are **capable** of operating for nearly **45 hours** at an **altitude** of up to **35,000 feet** as tensions escalated with China's People's Liberation Army.
- These drones are reportedly much more advanced than the Herons present in the current inventory & also

their anti-jamming capability is also much better in comparison to the previous versions.

- These drones have been procured under the emergency financial powers granted by **Prime Minister (PM) Narendra Modi**-led government to the armed forces.
- Accordingly, the defence forces can purchase equipment and systems amounting to Rs 500 crore in order to augment their warfighting capabilities.
- Using the same facility, the Indian Navy has leased two Predator drones which have been taken from American firm General Atomics.
- Earlier, such a facility was given to the Defence Forces was in 2019 right after the Balakot airstrikes in Pakistan.

### Indian Navy - Innovating towards Nation Building

- On the occasion of **Navy Day Dec 04, 2021**, The **Innovation Pavilion**, set up at the Navy House, was inaugurated by Hon'ble Raksha Mantri **Shri Rajnath Singh**.
- The pavilion showcased how Indian Navy has synergised innovation and Indigenisation efforts and collaborated with Academia and Industry, in keeping with the theme for this year's Navy Day "**Indian Navy – Innovating towards Nation Building**", towards larger emphasis on Nation Building whilst keeping its focus on own Self-Reliance.
- The innovations presented in accordance with the vision of Mission Raksha Gyan Shakti and displayed stalls on **four major aspects**.
- Innovations for Healthcare
- Partnering with Academia for Technology Evolution
- Engaging with Young India
- Innovation for Self-Reliance and Beyond

#### Innovations for Healthcare:

- It displayed certain 'game changing' Medical innovations including those undertaken jointly with IIT, Mumbai like Aadyant ORS (O2 Recycling System) for enhanced safety in ICUs, Sanitizer using Nano-technology effective on MRSA bacteria, AI-based Nebulizer, and a Low-cost digital stethoscope for telemedicine, especially for rural/remote areas.

#### Partnering with Academia for Technology Evolution:

- It displayed Dental Dome, Navrakshak gowns, Autonomous Boat, and Quad-Copter which was a result of the agreement between the Indian Navy and Rashtriya Raksha University (RRU) for licensing of in-house developed technology, to MSMEs for mass manufacture.

#### Engaging with Young India stall

- It displayed products developed by the Indian Navy in conjunction with National Forensic Science University (NFSU).
- These included Limpet Mine Detection System, Caged Drone for firefighting, Autonomous Beach Check Survey Device (ABCD) and Portable UW Diver Delivery System which is being handed over to NFSU for further refinement.

#### **Innovation for Self-Reliance and Beyond:**

- It displayed Indigenisation efforts by the Indian Navy to reduce import dependency and provide export potential.
- These included Tactical Mobile Fiber Optic Cable with Jetty Enclosure, Upper Deck Paint, Autonomous Modular Inflatable Target (AMIT), Remote Embedded Systems Support (RESS) and 30 mm Pre-fragmented Shells.

#### **Note:**

- Indian Navy Day is celebrated on December 4 to commemorate the launch of **Operation Trident** by the Indian navy **against Pakistan** during the **1971 Indo-Pak war**.

#### **India-Maldives Joint military exercise - ECUVERIN began at Kadhdhoo Island**

- The 11th edition of Exercise ECUVERIN between India and Maldives will be conducted at Kadhdhoo Island, Maldives.
- It is a 14-day exercise scheduled from December 6 to 19.

#### **India Successfully Tests Extended Range Pinaka Rocket System At Pokhran Range**

- The Defence Research and Development Organisation's (DRDO) successfully tested an extended range Pinaka (Pinaka-ER) Multi Barrel Rocket Launcher System at Rajasthan's Pokhran Range.
- The system is jointly designed by laboratories of Defence Research and Development Organisation (DRDO) - Armament Research & Development Establishment (ARDE), Pune and High Energy Materials Research Laboratory (HEMRL), Pune.
- The new Pinaka ER gives it a range of around 70 km, over the 45 km existing range of the missile.
- The Pinaka - ER is the upgraded version of the earlier version of Pinaka which has been in service with the Indian Army for the last decade.
- The system has been designed in the light of emerging requirements with advanced technologies enhancing the range.
- The **Area Denial Munition (ADM)** variants of munition designed by the ARDE, Pune for Pinaka and manufactured by the industry partners under technology transfer were successfully carried out at Pokhran Field Firing Ranges. These trials are part of performance evaluation under technology absorption.



- Earlier, In June, the DRDO had successfully test-fired enhanced range versions of indigenously developed Pinaka rockets and 122mm Caliber rockets from a Multi-Barrel Rocket Launcher (MBRL) in Chandipur off the coast of Odisha.
- The enhanced range version of the Pinaka Rocket System can destroy targets at distances up to 45km.

#### DRDO & Indian Air Force successfully flight-tests SANT missile

- On Dec 11, 2021, Defence Research and Development Organisation (DRDO) and Indian Air Force (IAF) flight-tested the indigenously designed and developed Helicopter launched Stand-off Anti-tank (SANT) Missile from Pokhran firing ranges of Rajasthan.
- The SANT missile has been **designed and developed by Research Centre Imarat (RCI), Hyderabad** in coordination with other DRDO labs and participation from industries.
- The SANT missile is equipped with a state-of-the-art MMW seeker which provides high precision strike capability from a safe distance.
- The missile has the ability to neutralise targets in a range of up to **10 kilometres**.
- This is the third in the series of indigenous stand-off weapons to be tested after long-range bomb and smart anti airfield weapons for strengthening the arsenal of IAF.
- The indigenous development of various configurations for different applications with advanced technologies is a firm march towards 'Aatmanirbharta' in defence.

#### HAL Obtains ADE-DRDO Supply Order For ABHYAS Target Platform

- On Dec 17, 2021, The **Hindustan Aeronautics Limited (HAL)** has secured an order for manufacturing, assembly, integration, testing and supply of **High-Speed Expendable Aerial Target (HEAT)** System known as **ABHYAS** from the **Aeronautical Development Establishment (ADE)** wing of the **Defense Research and Development Organization (DRDO)**.
- After successful completion of this initial order, HAL would be identified as Development-cum-Production Partner (DcPP) for supply of this target system along with a private firm (50% of the volume).
- The platform is estimated to have a large requirement from the tri-services for evaluation trials of missile programs.

#### India successfully test-fires new generation Agni Prime missile off Odisha coast

- On Dec 18, 2021, Defence Research and Development Organisation (DRDO) successfully test-fired the new generation nuclear-capable ballistic missile 'Agni Prime' from APJ Abdul Kalam island off the coast of Odisha in Balasore.
- The first test was successfully carried out on June 28, 2021 by the DRDO.

### DRDO conducts flight demonstration of Controlled Aerial Delivery System

- On December 18, 2021, Aerial Delivery Research and Development Establishment (ADRDE), Agra conducted a flight demonstration of Controlled Aerial Delivery System of 500 kg capacity (CADS-500).
- The flight demonstration is part of a series of activities organised towards celebrating '**Azadi Ka Amrit Mahotsav**', commemorating **75 years of Independence**.
- The **Controlled Aerial Delivery System (CADS-500)** is used for the precise delivery of the payloads up to 500 kgs at a predetermined location by making the use of manoeuvrable capabilities of the **Ram Air Parachute (RAP)**.
- It uses the Global Positioning System for the coordinates, altitude and heading sensors for the heading information during its flight.
- The CADS, with its onboard electronics unit, autonomously steers its flight path using waypoint navigation towards target location by operating controls.
- System performance was demonstrated at Drop Zone, Malpura from an altitude of 5000m.
- The system was para-dropped from AN32 aircraft and then steered to the predesignated landing point in autonomous mode.
- Eleven paratroopers of the Indian Army and Indian Air Force chased the CADS-500 in air and landed simultaneously.

### Indian Navy's second indigenous stealth destroyer sails for maiden sea Trials

- On the occasion of Goa Liberation Day (Dec 19, 2021) Mormugao, the Indian Navy's second indigenous stealth destroyer of the P15B class, proceeded on her maiden sea sortie.
- It is the Indian Navy's **second** indigenous stealth destroyer of the P15B class, planned to be commissioned in mid-2022.
- Mormugao', built at **Mazagon Dock Shipbuilders Ltd (MDSL)** as part of the Project 15B destroyers, incorporates several niche indigenous technologies.
- The ship's name was dedicated to the maritime state of Goa with the goal to enhance the bonding between the Indian Navy and the people of Goa and to link the ship's identity permanently to the crucial role the Navy played in nation-building.
- In November 2021 of INS Visakhapatnam and the fourth P75 submarine INS Vela, commencement of sea trials of Mormugao is testimony to the cutting-edge capabilities of MDSL and the strong indigenous shipbuilding tradition of a modern and vibrant India.

### Indian Army inducts indigenously developed Armoured Engineer Reconnaissance Vehicles (AERV)

- The first set of indigenously developed next-generation Armoured Engineer Reconnaissance Vehicle

(AERV) was inducted into the Corps of Engineers of the Indian Army at a function attended by Chief of Army Staff General MM Naravane at Pune.

- The system has been designed by Defence Research and Development Organisation (DRDO) and manufactured by Ordnance Factory Medak and Bharat Electronics Limited, Pune.

#### IAF deploys first S-400 air defence system in Punjab

- The **Indian Air Force (IAF)** has started deploying its **S-400 air defence missile system** in the **Punjab** sector in a major boost to India's capability to tackle aerial threats from both **China and Pakistan**.
- The S-400 air defence system was contracted for by India in a deal worth around **Rs 35,000 crore** and five squadrons would be provided to India for tackling air threats from up to 400 km.
- It is equipped with four different missiles which can engage enemy aircraft, ballistic missiles, and AWACS planes at 400 km, 250 km, the medium-range 120 km and the short-range 40 km.
- The first squadron deliveries are expected to be complete by the end of 2021.
- Indian Air Force officers and personnel have trained in Russia on the system.

#### Rajnath Singh unveils indigenous "Multi-terrain Artillery Gun" (MArG)

- Union Defence Minister Rajnath Singh launched indigenous Multi-terrain Artillery Gun (MArG) 155 – BR in the presence of Army Chief General Manoj Mukund Naravane.
- In line with the Government's Make-in-India and Atmanirbhar Bharat Mission, it is developed by Indian Multinational Company Bharat Forge Limited.

#### Security of Offshore Assets reviewed during exercise "Prasthan"

- The security of the Offshore Development Area (ODA) in Krishna Godavari Basin on the East Coast of India was reviewed during exercise "Prasthan" conducted from 21 December to 22 December 21.
- The biannual exercise was coordinated and controlled by NOIC (APD) from Joint Operations Centre (JOC) Vizag under the aegis of Indian Navy.
- The exercise was conducted for a **duration of 24 hours** to cater for multiple contingencies that can be expected in all scenarios including simulating an evacuation by helo in dark hours.
- Aim :
- To assess overall security architecture to provide support during an emergent situation at ODA and for the Oil Operators to validate their Standard Operating Procedures laid out for various contingencies related to ODA.
- Indian Naval Ships **Kamorta, Tarmugli** along with ISVs, T 36, T 38, T 39 and ICG ship **Kanaklata Barua** participated in the exercise along with MARCOS from INS Karna and naval helicopters from INS Dega.
- Oil Operators namely ONGC Ltd, Reliance Ltd & Vedanta Ltd, Coastal Police, Department of Port and

Department of Fisheries also participated.

#### DRDO successfully conducts Flight-Test of Indigenous Aerial Target 'Abhyas'

- On Dec 23, 2021, Defence Research and Development Organisation (DRDO) successfully tested indigenously developed High-speed Expendable Aerial Target (HEAT) Abhyas from Integrated Test Range (ITR) at Chandipur off the coast, Odisha.
- It has been developed by DRDO's Bengaluru-based laboratory- **Aeronautical Development Establishment (ADE)**.
- During the flight trial, High subsonic speed trajectory at a **very low altitude with high endurance** was demonstrated.
- Two boosters provided initial acceleration during launch and a small turbo jet engine is used to sustain high subsonic speed with long endurance.
- The indigenous data link designed by Bengaluru based Industry partner has been successfully flown and tested during the flight.
- The performance of the system during the entire flight duration has been confirmed from the data captured by various Range instruments.
- The aircraft is controlled from a ground based controller and an indigenously developed MEMS based Inertial Navigation System along with the Flight Control Computer which helps it to follow the pre-designated path in a fully autonomous mode.

#### INS Khukri decommissioned at Visakhapatnam

- Indian Navy Ship (INS) Khukri, the first of the indigenously-built missile corvettes, has been decommissioned after 32 years of service at Visakhapatnam.
- The national flag, naval ensign, and the decommissioning pennant were lowered at sunset in the presence of Flag Officer Commanding-in-Chief Eastern Naval Command Vice Admiral Biswajit Dasgupta and some of the serving and former commanding officers of the ship.
- During her service in the Indian Navy, the ship was commanded by 28 commanding officers and traversed a distance of over 6,44,897 nautical miles (a measurement used to measure distance in open sea), which is equivalent to navigating around the world 30 times or three times the distance between the Earth and the Moon.
- The Indian Naval Ship, Khukri was affiliated with the Gorkha Brigade of the Indian Army and Lieutenant General PN Ananthanarayan, president Gorkha Brigade, attended the decommissioning ceremony.

#### INS Sudarshini Deployment to Gulf Region – Sambandh

- **Sail Training Ship INS Sudarshini**, was deployed to the Gulf as part of the **Indian Navy's** endeavor to

enhance maritime cooperation with the friendly navies in the region.

- The ship entered Port Rashid, Dubai (UAE) today, after a passage of seven days through the Gulf.
- This marks the second phase of the ship's deployment in Gulf countries (Oman was from August 5, 2021).
- The month-long deployment, the ship made port calls at Muscat, Dubai and Bandar Abbas and had professional interactions with Royal Oman Navy (RNO), UAE Navy and Islamic Republic of Iran (IRI) Navy.
- The Ship built at **Goa Shipyard Ltd** & discussed bilateral training cooperation, Sail training and other areas of mutual interest.
- During the deployment, undertook various training exchanges, wherein sail training was imparted to trainees from RNO and IRI Navy and sea sorties conducted.
- The ship also participated in Bilateral Maritime Partnership Exercises with RNO and IRI for enhancing interoperability between the Navies.

#### **NSDC and GIF launched a Project named AMBER to Empower Youth with Industry Relevant Skills**

- National Skill Development Corporation (NSDC) and Generation India Foundation (GIF) launched a Project named AMBER (Accelerated Mission for Better Employment and Retention) at India Habitat Centre, New Delhi to bridge the gap between skilling and employment.
- The main objective of this project is to develop and implement a scalable and sustainable model of skill development to empower India's youth with industry-relevant skills and employment opportunities.

#### **Paras Defence gets DRDO contract for border surveillance tech**

- The **Defence Research and Development Organization (DRDO)** selected **Paras Defence and Space Technologies** for handing over the technology of border surveillance systems as developed by Instruments Research & Development Establishment and DRDO.
- This technology has been transferred by a licensing agreement for **transfer of technology (ToT)** for border surveillance systems entered between the company, **Instruments Research & Development Establishment (IRDE) and Defence Research and Development Organization (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.
- Paras Defence and Space Technologies is primarily engaged in designing, developing, manufacturing and testing of a wide range of defence and space engineering products and solutions.
- Its product offerings cater to four major segments of the Indian defence sector i.e. defence and space optics, defence electronics, electro-magnetic pulse (EMP) protection solution and heavy engineering for defence and niche technologies.

### Defense Minister Rajnath Singh inaugurates Brahmos missile manufacturing unit in Lucknow

- Defense minister Rajnath Singh laid the foundation stone of the Defense Technology and Test Center and BrahMos manufacturing center that will be established by the Defense Research and Development Organization (DRDO) in Lucknow.
- Recent News :
- Recently India successfully test-fired the air version of the BrahMos supersonic cruise missile from the integrated test range of Chandipur, off the coast of Odisha.

### India successfully test-fired new generation ballistic missile 'Agni-P'

- Defence Research and Development Organisation (DRDO) successfully test-fired the new generation nuclear-capable ballistic missile 'Agni Prime' from APJ Abdul Kalam island off the coast of Odisha in Balasore.

#### About Agni – P:

- Agni Prime is a new generation advanced variant of the Agni class of missiles with range capability between 1,000 and 2,000km.

### CURRENT AFFAIRS: SCIENCE & TECHNOLOGY

### China launches new communications satellite - Zhongxing-1D

- China successfully launched a new communications satellite Zhongxing-1D or ChinaSat-1 from the Xichang Satellite Launch Centre in southwest Sichuan Province.
- The satellite was launched by a **Long March-3B carrier rocket** and entered the planned orbit successfully.
- It was developed under the **China Academy of Space Technology**, the country's main, state-owned spacecraft maker.
- The satellite is able to provide high-quality voice, data, and radio and television transmission services.
- The launch marked the 399th mission for the Long March series carrier rockets.
- The ChinaSat-1 series is specifically designed for military communications, with the first of this type launched in 2011.
- 2021 has been a record-breaking year for Chinese launch activity and this launch was China's 47th of the year.

### DBT-NBRC develop world's first Multimodal Brain Imaging Data and Analytics, SWADESH

- Department of Bio-Technology and National Brain Research Centre (DBT-NBRC) in Haryana has developed the world's first Multimodal Brain Imaging Data and Analytics called SWADESH.
- The unique brain initiative has been developed by the DBT-National Brain Research Centre (DBT-NBRC), Gurgaon, Haryana.



- SWADESH was **inaugurated** by **Dr. Jitendra Singh**, Union Minister of State (Independent Charge) for the Ministry of Science and Technology.
- Purpose:
- To strengthen **Alzheimer's disease (AD)** research and help the scientific community come up with promising treatments.

#### Indian Navy launches large survey ship 'Sandhayak'

- Indian Navy, Garden Reach Shipbuilders and Engineers Ltd. (GRSE) a Defence PSU and a leading warship building company of India launched its first indigenously built Survey Vessel - 'Sandhayak' in the presence of Minister of State for Defence Ajay Bhatt.
- It was formally launched by **Pushpa Bhatt**, wife of Ajay Bhatt, 'Sandhayak' is the first in the series of four ships under the Survey Vessel (Large) project for the Indian Navy.
- The ships are fully designed by the Design team of GRSE to meet the requirements of the Indian Navy and are being built and outfitted utilising the concepts of '**Integrated Construction**'.
- It is in compliance with applicable provisions and regulations of the Classification Society (IRS).
- The vessel has over 80 percent indigenous content by cost.
- The primary role of these survey ships would be to conduct full-scale coastal and deep-water hydrographic survey of ports and harbours, and determination of navigational channels and routes.
- These ships are also capable of undertaking surveys of Maritime limits and collection of **Oceanographic** and **Geographical data for Defence applications**.
- It would be capable of performing roles such as Search and Rescue and Disaster Relief, besides serving as hospital ships with limited facilities during emergencies.
- The ships will have a retractable hanger for stowage of a utility helicopter
- These ships are propelled by two Marine Diesel Engines combined with Fixed Pitch Propellers and fitted with Bow & Stern Thrusters for manoeuvring at low speeds during surveys.
- Note:
- In October 2018, Indian Ministry of Defence and GRSE signed the contract to build the four survey ships.

#### India Successfully Test-Fires Air Version of BrahMos Supersonic Missile

- On Dec 08, 2021, **India** successfully test-fired the air version of the **BrahMos supersonic cruise missile** from the supersonic fighter aircraft **Sukhoi 30 MK-I** from the integrated test range of **Chandipur, off the coast of Odisha**.
- The missile launched from the aircraft followed the planned trajectory, achieving all mission objectives.
- The "copy book flight" followed the pre-planned trajectory and met all objectives.

- The launch has cleared the way for serial production of air-version BrahMos missiles.
- It is a major milestone in the BrahMos development as it paves the way for the serial production of air-version BrahMos missiles within the country.
- Various laboratories of Defence Research and Development Organisation (DRDO), academic institutions, quality assurance & certification agencies, Public Sector undertakings and Indian Air Force participated in the development, testing, production and induction of this complex missile system.
- The air version of the BrahMos was last tested in July 2021.

#### DRDO successfully test fires Vertically Launched Short Range Surface to Air Missile

- On Dec 07, 2021, Defence Research and Development Organisation (DRDO) successfully tested the vertical launch short range surface-to-air missile from integrated test range, Chandipur, off the Odisha coast.
- The test launch was monitored by senior officials from DRDO and the Indian Navy for neutralising various aerial threats at close ranges, including sea-skimming targets.
- The launch of the system was conducted to validate the integrated operation of all weapon system components, "including the vertical launcher unit with controller, canisterised flight vehicle, weapon control system etc.
- It was conducted from a vertical launcher against an electronic target at a very low altitude.
- The flight path of the vehicle along with health parameters were monitored using a number of tracking instruments deployed by ITR, Chandipur.
- The missile has an operational range of **50 km distance** and features mid course inertial guidance through fiber optic gyroscope and active radar homing in terminal phase.
- The integration of this weapons system will further boost the defence capability of Indian Warships against aerial threats.

#### Note:

- The first trial was conducted on **February 22, 2021** and this was a confirmatory trial to prove the consistent performance of the configuration and integrated operation.

#### NASA launches X-ray telescope to study black holes

- US space agency NASA launched its new X-ray Mission to unlock the secrets of extreme cosmic objects.
- The mission lifted off aboard SpaceX's Falcon 9 rocket from historic Launch Complex 39A (LC-39A) at NASA's Kennedy Space Center in Florida, United States.
- The project is a collaboration between **NASA** and the **Italian Space Agency**.

- Purpose:
- To measure X-rays released by black holes, neutron stars, supernova remnants and other high-energy objects.
- The spacecraft includes three identical space telescopes with sensitive detectors capable of measuring the polarisation of cosmic X-rays,
- IXPE is NASA's first mission to explore the polarisation signatures of a variety of X-ray sources.

#### South Korean Defence Ministry unveils model for hypersonic weapon prototype

- The South Korean Defense Ministry has unveiled a model for a hypersonic weapon prototype named Hycore.
- Seoul is reportedly aiming to begin testing in **2022**.
- The missile's basic structure, including its two-stage solid-fueled rocket and scramjet engine.
- The weapon, which bears a stark resemblance to Boeing's X-51 Waverider experimental hypersonic vehicle.
- Hypersonic weapons are capable of traveling faster than Mach 5, or five times the speed of sound, and have maneuvering capabilities that together with their extreme speed render them almost impervious to most air defense systems.
- They can be launched from the surface, from a submarine, or by aircraft, and often have extremely long ranges.

#### India successfully test-fires supersonic missile assisted torpedo in Odisha

- On Dec 13, 2021, The Defence Research and Development Organisation (DRDO) successfully test-fired Supersonic Missile Assisted Torpedo (SMART) off the coast of Balasore in Odisha.
- The system is a next-generation missile-based standoff torpedo delivery system.
- The system has been designed to enhance anti-submarine warfare capability far beyond the conventional range of the torpedo.
- The canister-based missile system consists of advanced technologies - two-stage solid propulsion, electro-mechanical actuators and precision inertial navigation.
- The long-range torpedoes can destroy targets up to 50 km, rocket-assisted torpedoes can strike at ranges around 150 km. Supersonic missile-assisted torpedoes have a range well over 600 km.
- The system will further enhance the strength of our Navy and promote self-reliance in defence, harnessing expertise and capabilities.

#### China successfully launches new satellites Shijian-6 05

- China has successfully launched a group of satellites Shijian-6 05 by a launch vehicle Long March-4B

from the Jiuquan Satellite Launch Center (Northwest China's Gansu Province).

- The Shijian-6 05, will be used for space exploration and new technology tests.
- The launch marked the 400th mission of Long March series carrier rockets.
- Over the past 51 years, since the first flight of Long March-1 in 1970, Long March carrier rockets have been used in 92.1 percent of China's space launches
- The first 100 launches took place over 37 years, but then things started to heat up: the next 100 took seven and half years, the third century took four years and three months, and the fourth only took two years and nine months.

#### ISRO developing a SSLV with private participation

- Union Minister of State (Independent Charge) Science & Technology; Minister of State (Independent Charge) Earth Sciences; MoS PMO, Personnel, Public Grievances, Pensions, Atomic Energy and Space, **Dr Jitendra Singh** stated, **ISRO** is developing a **Small Satellite Launch Vehicle (SSLV)** with private participation to be launched in **1<sup>st</sup> quarter of 2022**.
- The SSLV will provide a payload capability of 500 kg to a 500 km planar orbit.
- The union government has **sanctioned ₹169 crore** for the development of the SSLV project including the development & qualification of the vehicle systems and the flight demonstration through three development flights (SSLV-D1, SSLV-D2 & SSLV-D3).
- The development of SSLV has been primarily envisaged to realize a cost-effective launch vehicle with high launch frequency and quick turnaround capability in order to cater to the growing opportunity in the global launch services market for small satellites.

#### SpaceX launches 52 Starlink satellites from California base

- On Dec 18, 2021, A SpaceX rocket carried 52 Starlink internet satellites into orbit from California.
- The two-stage Falcon 9 rocket lifted off from **coastal Vandenberg Space Force Base**.
- The Falcon's first stage returned and landed on a SpaceX drone ship in the ocean & the second stage continued into orbit and deployment of the satellites was confirmed
- It was the 11th launch and recovery of the stage.
- The mission was the 34th launch for Starlink, a constellation of nearly 2,000 satellites in low Earth orbit.
- SpaceX also launched a Turkish communications satellite from Florida.
- Starlink is a satellite-based global internet system that SpaceX has been building for years to bring internet access to underserved areas of the world.

#### Kerala's Kufos to partner with NASA-ISRO research programme

- The Kerala University of Fisheries and Ocean Studies (KUFOS) has been chosen to join a research

project backed by the Space Application Centre of Indian Space Research Organisation (ISRO) under a NASA-ISRO collaborative programme

- The project will be headed by **Girish Gopinath**, Associate Professor of Remote Sensing and GIS at KUFOS and U Surendran, Senior Scientist at CWRDM
- KUFOS has been selected as one of the nodal agencies in South India to implement the project.

#### **Pakistan successfully test-fires updated version of Babur cruise missile 1B**

- **Pakistan** has "successfully" test-fired a version of its indigenously developed **Babur cruise missile 1B with enhanced range**.
- The cruise missile has a range of more than **900 kilometers**, twice the distance of an earlier missile of the same model (An earlier version had a limited capacity to travel just 450 kilometers).
- The test-launch of the missile was witnessed by Director General of the Strategic Plans Division Lieutenant General Nadeem Zaki Manj, NESCOM Chairman Dr Raza Samar, Commander Army Strategic Force Command Lieutenant General Muhammad Ali, senior officers, scientists and engineers of strategic organisations.

#### **Note :**

- The Babur cruise missile 1A was launched from a "state of the art Multi Tube Missile Launch Vehicle"
- In **February 2021**, **Pakistan** had conducted a successful training launch of the earlier version of **Babar cruise missile** that had the limited capacity to strike targets up to **450 kilometers**.
- In **August 2021**, it conducted a successful test flight of **Fatah-1**, a Pakistan-made guided multi-launch rocket system capable of delivering conventional warheads.
- Recent News :
- On Nov 24, 2021, **Pakistan** had successfully conducted a flight test of **Shaheen-1A** surface-to-surface ballistic missile & the test flight was aimed at re-validating certain design and technical parameters of the weapon system.

#### **India successfully tests 'Pralay' missile off Odisha coast**

- 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.

#### **Japan launches Inmarsat-6 F1 communications satellite into orbit**

- Japan launched the Inmarsat-6 F1 satellite launched atop a Mitsubishi Heavy Industries H-2A rocket from Japan's Tanegashima Space Center.
- The **12,060-pound (5,470 kilograms)** Inmarsat-6 F1 is the first of two "I-6" spacecraft that London-based company Inmarsat plans to loft to geostationary orbit, about **22,240 miles (35,790 kilometers)** above our

planet.

- The I-6 pair "are the largest and most sophisticated commercial communications satellites ever launched.
- Inmarsat's first dual-payload satellites, the I-6s feature both L-band (ELERA) and Ka-band (Global Xpress) payloads.

#### China launches new camera satellite with high resolution to find resources

- On Dec 26, 2021, the **China National Space Administration (CNSA)** informed **China** launched a **new satellite with a camera** that can take pictures of the ground with a resolution of **five meters**.
- The satellite, called "Ziyuan-1 02E" or "five-meter optical satellite 02," was launched by a Long March-4C rocket from the Taiyuan Satellite Launch Centre in north China's Shanxi province.

#### NASA launches world's most powerful space telescope

- World's largest and most powerful space telescope, **James Webb Space Telescope**, has been launched successfully into orbit in an **Ariane rocket from the European Space Agency's base in French Guiana**.
- Purpose :
- To make breakthrough discoveries on the origins of the Universe and Earth-like planets beyond our solar system.

#### Russia launches 3rd and final Angara A5 demonstration mission

- Russia has launched its third and final demonstration of its new heavy-class flight of the Angara A5 rocket.
- It is being developed and built by the **Khrunichev State Research and Production Space Center in Moscow, Russia** and is intended to replace several existing launch vehicles.
- It was the **third** launch of the new rocket after its maiden voyage in 2014.

#### Note :

- The last launch of the heavy-class Angara rocket took place in December 2020.

#### Russia launches 1st Versatile Nuclear Powered Icebreaker 'Sibir'

- **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.
- Note :
- Russia has a fleet of six nuclear-powered icebreakers: "Taymyr", "Vaygash", "50 Let Pobedy", "Yamal", "Arktika" and "Sibir".



- Also, the nuclear-powered cargo ship “Sevmorput” belongs to Rosatomflot’s fleet based in Murmansk.
- Currently Ural, Yakutia, and Chukotka nuclear icebreakers are being built in St. Petersburg.

#### Union Minister of State Dr Jitendra Singh launches unique face recognition Technologies for Pensioners.

- Minister of State for Personnel, Public Grievances and Pensions Dr. Jitendra Singh today launched "unique" Face Recognition Technology for Pensioners in New Delhi.
- He said that Face Recognition Technique of giving **Life Certificate** is a historic and far-reaching reform and this will bring ease of living for the retired and the elderly citizens.
- It will touch the lives of not only **68 lakh Central Government Pensioners** but also Crores of Pensioners who fall outside the jurisdiction of this Department such as EPFO and State Government Pensioners.

#### ISRO, Oppo India collaborate to ramp up messaging service in oceans.

- To strengthen the **Research and Development (R&D)** of **NavIC** or the **Indian Regional Navigation Satellite System (IRNSS)** messaging service, the Indian Space Research Organisation has signed a pact with **Oppo India**.
- **NavIC is a messaging service platform**, which provides regional navigation services covering the entire country and an area up to 1,500 km beyond the Indian boundaries.
- Notably, the messaging platform primarily provides PNT (position, navigation, and timing) services along with the capability of broadcasting short messages (safety-of-life alerts) in areas with poor or no communication, particularly in oceans.

#### 1st of its kind in India GIS based ‘Automatic Water Supply System’ launched by Rajnath Singh.

- **Union Defence Minister Rajnath Singh** launched India’s first of its kind Geographic Information System (GIS) Based ‘**Automatic Water Supply System**’ for citizens of Cantonment Boards under **eChhawani** project.
- It is an easy and 100% automatic process.
- This module has been developed by Bhaskaracharya Institute for Space Applications and Geo informatics (BISAG) under the guidance of Defence Secretary and Director General of Defence Estates (DGDE), Delhi.
- The integration of this e-Chhawani portal is done by **Bharat Electronics Limited (BEL)**.

#### India’s 1st ABDM integrated health locker launched by Docprime Technologies

- Gurugram based Docprime Technologies Private Limited, a wholly owned subsidiary of PB Fintech has launched free of cost India’s first Health Locker integrated with Ayushman Bharat Digital Mission (ABDM) named ‘Docprime Health Locker’.
- ABDM integrated Health Locker will provide users a digital and self-consented health data management

system. It will **store and manage health records electronically**.

#### Tamil Nadu Government Launches CM Dashboard monitoring system “CM Dashboard Tamil Nadu 360”

- Tamil Nadu government launched the Chief Minister (CM) Dashboard monitoring system, “CM Dashboard Tamil Nadu 360” in Chennai.
- It will enable CM to track all welfare schemes, including the status of their implementation, fund allocation, and the number of beneficiaries along with updates on the storage of water in dams and rainfall patterns.
- Along with CM M.K.Stalin, Minister for Water Resources Durai Murugan and IT Minister Mano Thangaraj also present at the launch event.

#### Japan introduced world's 1st Dual-Mode Vehicle that can run on Roads and Tracks

- Japan introduced a minibus lookalike world's first dual-mode vehicle (DMV) in its town of Kaiyo.
- The vehicle can run on normal rubber tyres on the road and runs in steel wheels when it hits the rail tracks. This vehicle can carry up to **21 passengers and runs at a speed of 60km/h on rail tracks and can go as fast as around 100km/h on public roads**.
- It runs on **diesel**.

### **CURRENT AFFAIRS: ENVIRONMENT**

#### Kyhytysuka sachicarum- Extinct swordfish-shaped marine reptile discovered

- A team of international researchers from Canada, Colombia, and Germany has discovered a new extinct marine reptile *Kyhytysuka sachicarum*.
- The new species “*Kyhytysuka*” which translates to “one that cuts with something sharp” in the Indigenous language from the central Colombian region the fossil was found in.
- Researchers chose the name in honour of the ancient **Muisca** culture that lived in the Villa de Leyva area for millennia.
- The team presented its findings in a study published this month in the **Journal of Systematic Paleontology**.

#### New Butterfly Species ‘Chocolate-Bordered Flitter’ Discovered in Sikkim

- The new butterfly species *Zographetus dzonguensis* was founded in the Namprickdang area, Noom Panang Village in upper Dzongu, North District, Sikkim.
- A study on the new species was **published** in the peer-reviewed scientific journal **Zootaxa**.
- This is the second butterfly species new to science from the Northeast after 2015.
- The team of researchers who discovered the species have proposed the English name ‘**Chocolate-bordered Flitter**’ as it has a chocolate coloured border around both the wings.

- The team of researchers included Krushnamegh Kunte, Sonam Wangchuk Lepcha, Tarun Karmakar, and Dipendra Nath Basu.
- The chocolate-brown spots on the hindwing of the Sikkim species are **smaller**, and the **white spots** on the **forewing** are also more sharply defined.
- The species appears to be **very local and seasonal**, occurring **below 1,000 metres** in mixed evergreen and semi-evergreen broad-leaved forests of North Sikkim District.
- It is active on sunny days from early morning to mid-day.
- It has largely been observed feeding on bird droppings in shaded stream beds.
- The species is very similar to two recently described species– **Z.pangi** from **Guangdong** and **Z.hainanensis** from **Hainan** in **China**.

#### **Carcass Of Endangered Bryde's Whale Found at Odisha Coast**

- The Endangered Bryde's Whale carcass was found near the Puri Border and Ganjam Districts of Odisha.
- This is the **fifth whale species**, which inhabited the Odisha coast, found dead in 13 months.
- The **48-foot-long female** whale was buried near the shore after conducting a post-mortem examination.
- Two whales - one male and the other female were found near the coast and it appears that the carcass is that of a female that got stuck in the sea bed due to low water level.
- Common Bryde's whale is a more extensive form occurring worldwide in warm temperate and tropical waters.
- Sittang or Eden's whale is a smaller form, which is restricted to the Indo-Pacific.
- A smaller & coastal form of B. Brydei is found off southern Africa.

#### **11th edition of World Migration Report 2022 launched by International Organization for Migration (IOM).**

- International Organization for Migration (IOM) of the United Nations launched the **11th edition of the World Migration Report 2022**, which states that the global international migration has increased from 84 million globally in 1970 to 281 million in 2020, the proportion of the international migrants has increased from 2.3% to 3.6% of the global population.
- The 2022 report stated that **climate change** has displaced more people than **conflicts**.
- The report reflects the regular data collection by the **Internal Displacement Monitoring Centre (IDMC)**.

#### **IUCN Red List - Dragonflies threatened as wetlands around the world disappear**

- According to an update of the **IUCN Red List of Threatened Species**, The **destruction of wetlands is leading** to the **decline** of **dragonflies** worldwide & the number of species at risk of extinction on the Red List has exceeded **40,000** for the first time.

- The assessment of the world's dragonflies and damselflies reveals that **16 percent out of 6,016 species** are at risk of extinction, as their freshwater breeding grounds increasingly deteriorate.
- Their decline is symptomatic of the widespread loss of the marshes, swamps and free-flowing rivers they breed in, mostly driven by the expansion of unsustainable agriculture and urbanization around the world.
- The IUCN Red List now includes 142,577 species of which 40,084 are threatened with extinction.

#### Askot Wildlife Sanctuary of Uttarakhand declared as Eco-Sensitive Zone

- An area of 454.65 square kilometres around the boundary of Askot Wildlife Sanctuary in the Pithoragarh district of Uttarakhand has been declared as the Askot Wildlife Sanctuary Eco-sensitive Zone(ESZ) by the Ministry of Environment, Forest and Climate Change (MoEF&CC)
- This area extends from 0 to 22 km around the Askot Wildlife Sanctuary.
- The Askot Wildlife Sanctuary was established to protect the endangered flagship species Musk Deer and its habitat.
- The Askot Wildlife Sanctuary is also known as **Musk Deer Park**.

#### **CURRENT AFFAIRS: RANKING & INDEX**

#### Tel Aviv ranked world's costliest city - The world's most expensive cities in 2021

- Tel Aviv the Israeli city has become the world's most expensive city to live in 2021, Paris and Singapore are jointly ranked second, followed by Zurich and Hong Kong at the fourth and fifth spots according to the annual Worldwide Cost of Living index released by the Economist Intelligence Unit (EIU).
- Tel Aviv climbed from 5th place to the top in 2021 due to the rising value of the Israeli currency shekel against US Dollar and the increase in the price of grocery and transport.
- The Syrian capital Damascus was ranked the world's cheapest city to live in.
- List of world's top 10 expensive cities
- Tel Aviv, Israel
- Paris, France
- Singapore
- Zurich, Switzerland
- Hong Kong
- New York, US
- Geneva, Switzerland
- Copenhagen, Denmark
- Los Angeles, US
- Osaka, Japan

**Note:**

- In 2020, Paris, Zurich and Hong Kong shared joint first place in the EIU's survey.

**IFFCO ranks first among top 300 cooperatives of the world**

- According to the 2021 edition of the 10th Annual World Cooperative Monitor (WCM) report, The Indian Farmers Fertiliser Cooperative Limited (IFFCO) has been ranked 'number one Cooperative' among the top 300 cooperatives in the world.
- The ranking is based on the ratio of turnover over the **gross domestic product (GDP)** per capita.
- It signifies that IFFCO is contributing significantly to the GDP and economic growth of the nation.
- The International Cooperative Alliance (ICA) and the European Research Institute on Cooperative and Social Enterprises (Euricse) launched the 2021 edition of the World Cooperative Monitor during an international webinar.
- The report is the 10th annual one and explores the economic and social impact of the largest cooperatives and mutual funds worldwide.
- IFFCO has also stepped up to 60th Position in overall Turnover ranking from 65th position in 2020.
- IFFCO is launching IFFCO Nano DAP and other nanotechnology-based products.

**HAL, BEL, Indian Ordnance Factories among top 100 Global Arms Manufacturers in 2020: SIPRI**

- According to the report by the Stockholm International Peace Research Institute (SIPRI), three Indian companies namely, Hindustan Aeronautics Limited (HAL), Indian Ordnance Factories, and Bharat Electronics Limited (BEL) are among the World's top 100 firms in the Combined Arms Sales in 2020.
- The arms sales of **HAL**, ranked **42nd**, and **BEL**, ranked **66th**, increased by 1.5 per cent and 4.0 per cent, respectively & **Indian Ordnance Factories** ranked **60th** arms sales rose marginally (by 0.2 per cent).
- US companies accounted for 54 per cent of the combined arms sales of the top 100.
- China was second at 13 per cent, followed by the UK at 7.1 per cent. Russia and France were fourth and fifth with 5 percent and 4.7 percent respectively of the combined arms sales for the top 100 companies.
- The world's top five arms manufacturers are US-based companies:
- Lockheed Martin
- Raytheon Technologies
- Boeing
- Northrop Grumman
- General Dynamics.
- India's aggregated arms sales of \$6.5 billion (approx Rs 48,750 crore) were 1.7 per cent higher in 2020

than in 2019.

- The report mentioned that the “combined arms sales of the world’s largest arms-producing and military services companies were \$531 billion in 2020.
- With 41 arms companies, the USA has the highest number of companies in the top 100 worldwide.
- Together, their arms sales amounted to \$285 billion, an increase of 1.9 per cent compared with 2019.

#### India Ranked 4th Most Powerful Country in Asia Power Index 2021

- According to a report by **Lowy Institute Asia Power Index 2021**, **India** has secured the **fourth post** as the most powerful country in Asia.
- Its overall score declined by two points compared to 2020.
- India is one of 18 countries in the region to trend downward in its overall score in 2021.

#### Top 10 countries for overall power in the Asia-Pacific region:

- United States of America with a score of 82.2
- China - 74.6
- Japan - 38.7
- India - 37.7
- Russia - 33.00
- Australia - 30.8
- South Korea - 30.00
- Singapore - 26.2
- Indonesia - 19.4
- Thailand - 19.2
- India performs best in the future resources measure, where it finishes behind only the US and China.
- India stands at the fourth position in other measures like economic capability, military capability, resilience, and cultural influence.
- India stayed in the 7th spot in its defence networks, reflecting developments in its regional defence diplomacy. Meantime, the country has tumbled down into the 8th spot for economic relationships, as it further falls behind in regional trade integration efforts.
- The report further noted that India is an underachiever relative to both its resources and potential.
- The institute noted that India exerts less influence in the region than expected due to its negative power gap score.

#### 2021 Forbes' 100 most powerful women list : FM Sitharaman in top 40

- On Dec 07, 2021, Union finance minister Nirmala Sitharaman was ranked 37th in the Forbes' 100 most



powerful women in the world.

- She has been featured **3rd time** in the list earlier in 2020 she has bagged the 41st spot & 34th spot in 2019.
- Founder and CEO of Nykaa, Falguni Nayar, who recently became India's seventh woman billionaire, made her debut and bagged the 88th spot.

**Other Indian women to feature on the list:**

- HCL Corporation CEO Roshni Nadar Malhotra who bagged the 52nd spot.
- Biocon Executive Chairperson Kiran Mazumdar-Shaw who was placed at 72 & Nykaa founder Falguni Nayar ranked 88th.
- Other notable faces on the list are Facebook's whistleblower Frances Haugen (100), Bangladeshi Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina Wajed (43).

**Note:**

- 2021 Forbes' 100 most powerful women list is 18th annual ranking of The World's 100 Most Powerful Women.

**Top 10 in Forbes' 100 most powerful women list:**

Rank	Name	Category
1	Philanthropist MacKenzie Scott	Philanthropy
2	US vice-president Kamala Harris	Politics & Policy
3	European Central Bank president Christine Lagarde	Politics & Policy
4	CEO of General Motors Mary Barra	Business
5	Philanthropist Melinda French Gates	Philanthropy
6	Fidelity Investments CEO Abigail Johnson	Finance
7	Santander Executive Chairman Ana Patricia Botín	Finance
8	President of European Commission Ursula von der Leyen	Politics & Policy

9	Taiwan President Tsai Ing-wen	Politics & Policy
10	Accenture CEO Julie Sweet	Business

### Global Health Security Index 2021: USA Tops, India Ranks 66

- According to the 2021 Global Health Security (GHS) Index, The world's overall performance on the GHS Index score slipped to 38.9 (out of 100) in 2021, from a score of 40.2 in the GHS Index, 2019.
- The document was jointly released by non-profits Nuclear Threat Initiative (NTI) and the Johns Hopkins Center for Health Security and it was first launched in October 2019.
- The index measured the capacities of 195 countries to prepare for epidemics and pandemics.
- The findings of the GHS Index 2021 are based on a revised framework and updated data collection conducted between August 2020 and June 2021.
- In South Asia, **India**, ranked **66th** place with a score of **42.8 (out of 100)** has slipped by 0.8 points since 2019.
- But three neighbouring countries Bangladesh, Sri Lanka and Maldives have improved their score by 1-1.2 points.

### Top 10 Countries in the list of Global Health Security Index 2021:

Rank	Country	Score (Out of 100)	Change from 2019
1	USA	75.9	-0.3
2	Australia	71.1	-2.1
3	Finland	70.9	-1.1
4	Canada	69.8	+ 2.2
5	Thailand	68.2	-0.7
6	Slovenia	67.8	-0.8
7	United Kingdom	67.2	-1.1

8	Germany	65.5	-0.2
9	South Korea	65.4	-0.5
10	Sweden	64.9	-1.5

- In 2021, **no country scored in the top tier** of rankings and no country scored **above 75.9**, the report showed.
- It has assessed countries across **six categories, 37 indicators and 171 questions**, using instantly available information.

**The six categories include:**

- **Prevention:** Prevention of the emergence or release of pathogens.
- **Detection and Reporting:** Early detection and reporting for epidemics of potential international concern.
- **Rapid Response:** Rapid response to and mitigation of the spread of an epidemic.
- **Health System:** Sufficient and robust health system to treat the sick and protect health workers.
- **Compliance with International Norms:** Commitments to improving national capacity, financing plans to address gaps, and adhering to global norms.
- **Risk Environment:** Overall risk environment and country vulnerability to biological threats.
- The GHS Index scoring system includes three tiers.
- **Low Scores:** Countries that score between 0 and 33.3 are in the bottom tier.
- **Moderate Scores:** Countries that score between 33.4 and 66.6 are in the middle tier and
- **High Scores:** Countries that score between 66.7 and 100 are in the upper or “top” tier.
- Some 101 high-, middle- and low-income countries, including India, have slipped in performance since 2019.
- Sixty-five percent of assessed countries had not published and implemented an overarching national public health emergency response plan for diseases with epidemic or pandemic potential.
- Close to 79 percent of the 195 countries assessed had not allocated national funds within the past three years to improve their capacity to address epidemic threats, it found.
- Some 90 countries have not fulfilled their full financial contribution to the World Health Organization & 14 of these are high-income countries.
- Countries across all income levels remain dangerously unprepared to meet future epidemic and pandemic threats.

### Maharashtra tops List Of States With Maximum Number Of Beneficiaries to be Assisted Under ABRY

- Maharashtra has topped the list of states with the maximum number of beneficiaries under the Atmanirbhar Bharat Rojgar Yojana (ABRY), with 6,49,560 new employees in 17,524 (Estts), Beneficial amount of 4,09,72,34,366.
- It is followed by Tamil Nadu 5,35,615 new employees and Gujarat 4,44,741.

#### Top 3 States :

Rank	States	Estts	New Employes	Beneficial amount ( Rs)
1	Maharashtra	17,524	6,49,560	4,09,72,34,366
2	Tamil Nadu	12,803	5,35,615	3,00,46,76,607
3	Gujarat	12,379	4,44,741	2,78,63,52,624

#### The average time taken to process claim settlement year wise is as follows:-

Financial Year	Average time taken to process claim (in days)
2019-20	11.5 days
2020-21	8.4 days
2021-22 (as on 06.12.2021)	7.3 days

### India 4th most spam-call affected nation: Truecaller Report

- Truecaller has launched its **fifth edition of the annual report titled 2021 Global Spam & Scam Report India** has moved up in rankings from **ninth to the fourth spot** this year in the tally of top 20 countries affected by spam calls owing to a significant increase in sales and telemarketing calls.
- Most spam calls in **India** were about sales (**93.5 percent**), followed by financial services (3.1 percent), nuisance (2 percent), and scams (1.4 percent).
- **Brazil** has retained its title of the **most spammed country** in the world (four years in a row) with 32.9 spam

calls per user per month.

- The data for Truecaller's conclusions was based on incoming and outgoing calls & messages between January 1, 2021 and October 31, 2021.
- Truecaller claims to have identified 184.5 billion calls and 586 billion spam SMS' around the globe.

#### Top 10 Countries affected by spam calls in 2021 :

- Brazil
- Peru
- Ukraine
- India
- Mexico
- Indonesia
- Chile
- Vietnam
- South Africa
- Russia
- In terms of **incoming spam messages per user per month**, **Cameroon topped** the list, followed by Somalia, Tanzania, Congo, Burkina Faso, Ivory Coast, and Benin.

#### India ranks 3rd in WADA's doping violators list : Russia Tops

- In the latest report published by the World Anti-Doping Agency, India ranked third in the list 152 (17% of the world total) Anti-doping Rule Violations (ADRVs) were reported in India in 2019.
- While **Russia** recorded **167** violators, having the top violators followed by **Italy** with **157** ADRVs.
- Brazil with 78 ADRVs is at fourth position and Iran with 70 ADRVs is at fifth position.
- In India 57 cases alone from bodybuilding, Weightlifting recorded 25, 10 from wrestling, 20 from athletics while 4 were recorded from boxing and judo.
- A total of 278,047 samples were collected by Anti-Doping Organisations worldwide in 2019, and subsequently, analyzed by WADA-accredited laboratories. Of these samples, 2,701 (1 percent) were reported as Adverse Analytical Findings.
- Based on a compilation of the information received by WADA till January 31, 2021, 1,535 samples (57%) were confirmed as ADRVs (sanctions).
- Note :
- In the 2018 WADA report meant for anti-doping violations , India was placed fourth with 107 ADRVs, behind Russia (144), Italy (132) and France (114).

### Global Unicorn Index 2021 : US Tops, India ranks 3rd

- According to the Hurun Global Unicorn Index 2021, India has a total of 54 unicorns, ranking it third (up from 33 unicorns in 2020) in the world.
- The USA led with 487 unicorns, up 254, followed by China on 301, up 74, together accounting for 74% of the world's unicorns.
- Top 10 make up 25% of the total value of the world's unicorns. 4 are from the USA, 3 from China and 1 from each of Australia, UK and Sweden.

#### Top 3 in Hurun Global Unicorn Index 2021 :

Rank	Company	City	Country
1	ByteDance	Beijing	China
2	Ant Group	Hangzhou	China
3	SpaceX	Los Angeles	USA

#### Indian Companies in the index :

- BYJU'S 15th position - (Bengaluru)
- InMobi - 28 (Bengaluru)
- OYO - 49 (Gurugram)
- Ola - 79 (Bengaluru)
- Phareasy- 100 (Mumbai)
- Swiggy - 100 (Bengaluru)

#### Top 5 countries in Hurun Global Unicorn Index 2021 :

Rank	Country	No.of.Unicorns
1-	USA	487 (+254)
2-	China	301 (+74)
3↑	India	54 (+33)



4↓	UK	39 (+15)
5↑	Germany	26 (+16)

**Top 10 Cities in Hurun Global Unicorn Index 2021 :**

Rank	City	No.of.Unicorns
1↑	San Francisco	151 (+83)
2↓	Beijing	91 (-2)
3↑	New York	85 (+52)
4↓	Shanghai	71 (+24)
5-	Shenzhen	32 (+12)
6↑	London	31 (+15)
7↑	Bengaluru	28 (+20)
8↓	Hangzhou	22 (+2)
9↑	Paris	18 (+12)
10↑	Berlin	17 (+12)

Year	No.of.unicorns	New faces
2019	494	-
2020	586	142
2021	1,058	673

- Indians founded 119 unicorns, of which 65 are outside of India and 54 are in India.
- Financial Services, Business Management Solutions, Healthcare and Retail have seen the biggest increase in number of unicorns in the past year.
- However, Russia, Saudi Arabia, and Poland are among 160 countries where no unicorns have been discovered.

#### Telangana Tops in the Implementation of SPMRM

- Telangana was the first in the implementation of the Syama Prasad Mookerjee Rurban Mission (SPMRM), Tamil Nadu and Gujarat secured the second and third positions respectively.

#### Top 5 States :

Rank	States
1	Telangana
2	TamilNadu
3	Gujarat
4	Punjab
5	Chattisgarh

#### Top 5 Clusters :

Rank	Cluster
1	Ryakal (Sangareddy, Telangana)
2	Jukkal (Kamareddy, Telangana)
3	Aibawk (Aizawl, Mizoram)
4	Murmunda

	(Rajnandgaon, Chhattisgarh)
5	Vaniyangudi (Sivaganga, Tamil Nadu)

### Objectives :

- (i) Sanitation,
- (ii) Piped Water Supply,
- (iii) Solid and Liquid Waste Management,
- (iv) Village Street Lights and Electrification,
- (v) Access to Village Streets With Drains,
- (vi) Inter Village Roads Connectivity,
- (vii) Public Transport,
- (viii) Skill Development Training Linked to Economic Activities,
- (ix) Agri-Services Processing and Allied Activities,
- (x) Health,
- (xi) Education,
- (xii) Digital Literacy,
- (xiii) Citizens Service Centres,
- (xiv) LPG Gas Connection,
- (xv) Environment,
- (xvi) Employment Generation and SHG Formation,
- (xvii) Tourism Promotion,
- (xviii) Sports Infrastructure,
- (xix) Social Infrastructure,
- (xx) Rural Housing,
- (xxi) Social Welfare.

### NITI Aayog Releases Fourth Edition of State Health Index

- NITI Aayog has released the fourth edition of the State Health Index for 2019–20.
- The report, titled “**Healthy States, Progressive India**”, ranks states and Union Territories on their year-on-

year incremental performance in health outcomes as well as their overall status.

- The report was released jointly by NITI Aayog Vice Chairman Dr Rajiv Kumar, CEO Amitabh Kant, Additional Secretary Dr Rakesh Sarwal, and World Bank Senior Health Specialist Sheena Chhabra.
- It has been developed by **NITI Aayog**, with technical assistance from the **World Bank**, and in close consultation with the **Ministry of Health and Family Welfare (MoHFW)**.
- The State Health Index is an annual tool to assess the performance of states and UTs.
- It is a weighted composite index based on 24 indicators grouped under the domains of 'Health Outcomes', 'Governance and Information', and 'Key Inputs/Processes'.
- To ensure comparison among similar entities, the ranking is categorized as 'Larger States', 'Smaller States' and 'Union Territories'.
- On overall ranking based on the composite index score in 2019–20, the top-ranking states were **Kerala (1)** and **Tamil Nadu (2)** among the 'Larger States', & while **Uttar Pradesh (19th)** was the worst.
- Among the **smaller states**, **Mizoram (1)** and **Tripura (2)** were the best performers and **Nagaland (8)** was at the bottom.
- Among the **union territories**, **Chandigarh** was on **top**, followed by Dadra and Nagar Haveli at number 2 and Delhi at number 3 & the puducherry was the worst overall performer.
- Among the 'Larger States', in terms of annual incremental performance, Uttar Pradesh, Assam and Telangana are the top three ranking states & Karnataka ranked 19th with least.
- Among '**Smaller States**', **Mizoram (1)** and **Meghalaya (2)** registered the maximum annual incremental progress & **Goa** ranked **8th** with least.
- Among **UTs**, **Delhi**, followed by **Jammu and Kashmir**, showed the best incremental performance & **Chandigarh** ranked **7th** with **least incremental performance**.
- Objective :
- To track progress on health outcomes and health systems performance, develop a healthy competition and encourage cross-learning among states and UTs
- The reports aim to nudge states/UTs towards building robust health systems and improving service delivery.

#### **CEBR: India to become 3rd largest economy in 2031**

- The Center for Economics and Business Research (CEBR) from the United Kingdom has predicted that the Indian economy will regain sixth position from France in 2022 and become the third-largest economy in 2031.
- CEBR, one of the UK's leading economics consultancies, in its annual World Economic League Table also

predicted that China will overtake the US in 2030, two years later than forecast a year ago.

- Over the next 15 years, India will see an improvement in its ranking in the World Economic League Table (WELT), rising from 7th place in 2021 to be the world's third-largest economy in 2036.
- The world economy is set to surpass \$100 trillion for the first time in 2022.
- As per World Economic League (WEL) India has a GDP per capita of \$7,314 in 2021, classifying it as a lower-middle-income country.
- A large drop in daily active cases has also contributed to a sharp rebound in economic activity in 2021, following a GDP contraction of 7.3% in 2020.
- The GDP in the second quarter of 2020 grew by 20.1% year-on-year amid a low base and despite the deadly second wave. This was followed by a slightly muted figure of 8.4% in Q3 2021, marking the fourth consecutive quarter of expansion.
- Overall, the economy is estimated to have grown by 8.5% in 2021, with output in 2021 expected to be 0.6% above 2019 levels.

#### World Economic League Table 2022 :

Ranking out of 191 countries	2021	2022	2023	2031	2036
United States	1	1	1	2	2
China	2	2	2	1	1
Japan	3	3	3	4	5
Germany	4	4	4	5	4
UK	5	5	6	6	6
France	6	7	7	7	7
India	7	6	5	3	3

#### [Maharashtra Retains Top Position in India Skills Report 2022.](#)

- India Skills Report (ISR) 2022, released by Wheebox. As, per the report Maharashtra has retained the top position in the list of states with the highest pool of employable talent followed by Uttar Pradesh and Kerala.

- The theme of ISR 2022: 'Reengineering Education and Skilling-Building for Future of Work'.

#### Top 5 States with Highest Employability:

Rank	State	Employability %
1	Maharashtra	66.1
2	Uttar Pradesh	65.2
3	Kerala	64.2
4	West Bengal	63.8
5	Karnataka	59.3

#### Top 5 Cities with Highest Employability:

Rank	Cities	Employability %
1	Pune (Maharashtra)	78.11
2	Lucknow (UP)	74.32
3	Trivandrum (Kerala)	66.48
4	Kolkata (WB)	57.16
5	Bengaluru (Karnataka)	56.48

#### IMD World Talent Ranking report 2021: India 56th Rank

- "World Talent Ranking Report" published by International Institute for Management Development (IMD) World Competitive Centre.
- As per the report **India has ranked 56th, Switzerland tops** the ranking followed by Sweden in 2nd and Luxembourg in 3rd.
- In the report, **Europe** has dominated the ranking in 2021 as top 10 countries are from this region.

#### Top 3 countries:

Rank	Country
1	Switzerland
2	Sweden
3	Luxembourg

### CURRENT AFFAIRS: ACQUISITIONS & MERGERS

#### PNB to pick up 9.5% stake in Open Network for Digital Commerce Ltd

- Public sector Punjab National Bank (PNB) will invest as a promoter in **Open Network for Digital Commerce**

by picking up over **9 percent stake** in the company.

- As the acquisition of shareholding is below 10 per cent, regulatory approval is not required.
- The Delhi-headquartered lender stated its participation in ONDC is 9.5 per cent equity capital in the company, or Rs 25 crore, whichever is lower.
- India is working on setting up an ONDC infrastructure which facilitates e-commerce by providing equal opportunities to all marketplace players.
- In such a platform, the buyer can sell on a platform without being registered there and vice versa.

#### **RIL inks \$736 mn green loan pact to fund REC Solar acquisition**

- Reliance Industries has signed a \$736 million equivalent green loan agreement with five banks to fund its acquisition of Norwegian solar panel manufacturer REC Solar Holdings.
- ANZ, Credit Agricole, DBS Bank, HSBC and MUFG were the lenders on the borrowing.
- The borrowing is split into a \$250m six-year term loan, a \$150m working capital facility and a \$336 million five-year bank guarantee facility.
- ANZ and MUFG took \$70m each of the term loan, while DBS and HSBC took \$40m apiece. Credit Agricole was allocated \$30m.
- Earlier, Reliance had announced the acquisition of 100 per cent shareholding of REC Solar from China National Bluestar (Group) for an enterprise value of \$771 million.
- Singapore-incorporated REC Solar is the borrower on the loan, while Reliance New Energy Solar, a wholly-owned subsidiary of RIL and the acquiring entity, is the guarantor.

#### **SMALLCAP World Fund ups stake in IIFL Finance**

- SMALLCAP World Fund, Inc has increased its stake in IIFL Finance from 4.2473 per cent to 5.1863 per cent through open market.
- It had 1.61 per cent stake in IIFL Finance as at September-end 2021, it had loan assets under management of ₹44,249 crore.
- As at September-end 2021, the promoter and promoter group, and the public had 24.93 per cent and 75.07 per cent stake in the company.

#### **Indian Oil Corporation Limited (IOCL) Acquires 4.93% Equity Stake In Indian Gas Exchange**

- State-run oil refiner Indian Oil Corporation Limited (IOCL) has acquired a 4.93 per cent equity share in Indian Gas Exchange Limited - the country's first automated national level gas exchange.
- Indian Oil's **board of directors approved** the deal at its meeting held on December 20.
- It has accorded approval for the acquisition of 36,93,750 equity shares of the face value of Rs 10 each equivalent to 4.93 per cent of the share capital in Indian Gas Exchange Limited (IGX).



- IOC's board has approved an investment of Rs 9,028 crore for laying a crude oil pipeline from Mundra in Gujarat to Panipat in Haryana.
- IGX is envisaged to play an important role to facilitate achieving the government's target of increasing the share of natural gas in India's energy basket from the current 6.5 per cent to 15 per cent by 2030.

#### SBI acquires minority stake in JSW Cement for Rs 100 cr

- The State Bank of India (SBI), India's largest public sector bank, has acquired a minority stake in JSW Cement Ltd by investing Rs 100 crore via compulsorily convertible preference shares (CCPS).
- The conversion of such CCPS into common equity of the company will be linked to JSW Cement's future business performance and valuation determined at the time of the proposed initial public offering (IPO) in the next 12 to 18 months.
- The capital infusion will support JSW Cement's capacity expansion from 14 million tons annually to 25 million tons.
- Earlier In 2021, global private equity investors, Apollo Global Management Inc. (through its investment entity in Singapore) and Synergy Metals Investments Holding Ltd invested Rs 1,500 crore investments in the company.
- SBI's domestic investment portfolio in shares stands at INR 7,981.38 crores as of March 31, 2021.

#### Wipro to acquire Edgile for \$230 million

- **Wipro Limited** has signed an agreement to acquire **Austin, Texas** headquartered **Edgile**, a transformational cybersecurity consulting provider that focuses on risk and compliance, information and cloud security, and digital identity.
- Wipro will acquire the company in a cash deal for a purchase consideration of **\$230 million**.
- Edgile's experienced cybersecurity and risk management professionals will allow Wipro to further enhance its cybersecurity and risk consulting capabilities for the benefit of its customers
- The company's 'strategy-first' approach and 'Quick Start' solutions will allow the combined entity to deliver enhanced value in strategic cybersecurity services.
- The transaction is expected to be completed before March 31, 2022, subject to regulatory approvals and customary closing conditions.
- It will require approval by the Committee on Foreign Investment and Hart-Scott-Rodino Antitrust in the US.
- The acquisition will address the fast-growing demand for cybersecurity consulting among Global 2000 enterprises.
- Together, Wipro and Edgile will develop Wipro CyberTransform, an integrated suite that will help enterprises enhance boardroom governance of cyber security risk, invest in robust cyber strategies, and

reap the value of practical security in action.

#### HSBC arm buys L&T Investment for ₹3,187 cr

- HSBC Asset Management, an indirect wholly owned subsidiary of HSBC Holdings plc, has acquired L&T Investment Management (LTIM) for \$425 million (about ₹3,187 crore) from L&T Finance Holdings.
- The acquisition will help HSBC widen asset management business in India.
- The acquisition, which is subject to regulatory approval, will help HSBC's asset management business in India and serve the wealth needs of the growing non-resident Indian customer base.
- HSBC intends to merge the operations of LTIM with its existing asset management business in India.

#### Note :

- LTIM is the investment manager of the L&T Mutual Fund.
- LTIM is currently ranked as the 12th largest mutual fund management company with assets under management of ₹80,300 crore and over 2.4 million active folios.
- This will be a third merger and acquisition in the Indian asset management space in 2021.

#### 1st Edition of India Young Water Professional Programme was launched virtually

- The first edition of the India Young Water Professional Programme (IYWPP) was launched virtually today in the presence of Mr. Manpreet Vohra, Indian High Commissioner to Australia, Barry O' Farrell, Australian High Commissioner to India and Ms. Debashree Mukherjee, Additional Secretary, DOWR, RD & GR, Ministry of Jal Shakti.
- This Program is unique and different from **typical capacity building and training programs**. It is focused on **Engaged Training and Learning Model**. About 70% of the program is focused on project based learning through **Situation Understanding and Improvement Projects (SUIP)**.

#### CURRENT AFFAIRS: BOOKS & AUTHORS

#### New Book Titled The Ambuja Story: How a Group of Ordinary Men Created an Extraordinary Company by Narotam Sekhsaria

- Indian businessman and philanthropist Narotam Sekhsaria authored a book titled The Ambuja Story: How a Group of Ordinary Men Created an Extraordinary Company.
- The Book will be Published by **HarperCollins Publishers India** & it is set to be released in December 2021.

#### Rachna Bisht Rawat's New Book titled 1971: Charge of the Gorkhas and Other Stories

- A New Book Titled 1971: Charge of the Gorkhas and Other Stories written by author Rachna Bisht Rawat.
- The Book will hit the stands on **December 10** & it is published by **Penguin Random House India (PRHI)**

#### Vice President releases book on 'Public Service Ethics' by Prabhat Kumar

- The Vice President, **Shri M. Venkaiah Naidu**, released the book, titled '**Public Service Ethics**' written by

**Shri Prabhat Kumar**, former Governor of Jharkhand and former Cabinet Secretary to the Government of India, & published by IC Centre for Governance at Upa-Rashtrapati Nivas.

- Venkaiah Naidu launches Gautam Chintamai's book 'The Midway Battle: Modi's Roller-coaster Second Term'
- Vice President M Venkaiah Naidu launched Gautam Chintamani's book 'The Midway Battle: Modi's Roller-coaster Second Term' at Upa-Rashtrapati Nivas in New Delhi.

#### **Key People:**

- Senior Journalist and Senior Adviser in the Ministry of Information and Broadcasting Mr.

#### **Mridula Ramesh Authors A Book Titled Watershed: How We Destroyed India's Water and How We Can Save It**

- Mridula Ramesh Authored a new Book Titled Watershed: How We Destroyed India's Water and How We Can Save It.
- The Book is published by **Hachette India**.

#### **Shashi Tharoor's new book titled Pride, Prejudice and Punditry launched**

- Former union minister and Lok Sabha MP Dr Shashi Tharoor's 23rd book, 'Pride, Prejudice and Punditry', was launched in Hyderabad.
- The book, **published by Aleph**, was earlier launched in Delhi.
- Awards & Honors:
- In 2019, Shashi Tharoor received the **Sahitya Academy Award** for his book **An Era of Darkness** in a non-fiction category in English language.

#### **VP releases book 'Gandhi Topi Governor' by Shri Yarlagadda Lakshmi Prasad**

- The Vice President, Shri M. Venkaiah Naidu released the book 'Gandhitopi Governor' by the Chairman, Official Language Commission, Andhra Pradesh, Shri Yarlagadda Lakshmi Prasad at Upa Rashtrapati Nivas, New Delhi.
- The Book is Published by **Emesco Books**.
- Former Governor of Tamil Nadu, Shri P.S. Rammohan Rao, author of the book, Shri Yarlagadda Lakshmi Prasad, CEO of Emesco Books, Shri Vijay Kumar and others were present during the event.
- About the Book :
- The book chronicles the life of Shri Edpuganti Raghavendra Rao.
- Awards & Honors :
- Padma Shri - 2003
- Sahitya Akademi Award - 2010

- Ganga Sharan Singh Award - 2012
- Padma Bhushan - 2016

#### **'Rewinding of First 25 years of Ministry of Electronics and Information Technology' book unveiled**

- The former adviser at the Ministry of Electronics and Information Technology (MeitY) Shri S.S. Oberoi authored a Book titled Rewinding of First 25 years of Ministry of Electronics and Information Technology.
- About the Book :
- The Book narrates the first 25 years of MeitY.

#### **Shantanu Gupta authored a Book Titled The Monk Who Transformed UP : Book on Yogi Adityanath**

- Shantanu Gupta **authored a Book Titled** The Monk Who Transformed Uttar Pradesh: How Yogi Adityanath Changed UP Waala Bhaiya' abuse to a Badge of Honour.
- The Book is published by Garuda Prakashan.

#### **About the Book :**

- The book chronicles how Uttar Pradesh Chief Minister Yogi Adityanath transformed the state in various aspects like law and order, connectivity, education, health infrastructure, and overall growth.

#### **Union Home Minister Amit Shah released a book titled Sahakar Sandarbha**

- Union Home Minister Amit Shah released a New Book Titled Sahakar Sandarbha at the convocation ceremony of Vaikuntha Mehta National Cooperative Management Institute (VAMNICOM ) in Pune, Maharashtra .

#### **Union Agriculture Minister, Shri Narendra Singh Tomar releases the book "Spices Statistics at a Glance 2021"**

- Agriculture Minister Narendra Singh Tomar has released the book titled Spices Statistics at a Glance 2021'.
- The book is published by the Directorate of Arecanut and Spices Development (DASD), Ministry of Agriculture & Farmers Welfare
- Note :
- DASD is the nodal agency for collection and compilation of area and production estimates of spices at the National level.
- VP Venkaiah Naidu released autobiography Titled The Turnover Wizard
- Vice-President M Venkaiah Naidu released the autobiography of former NTPC and NBCC chief Arup Roy Choudhury, titled "The Turnover Wizard".
- The book is published by **HP Hamilton**.
- The launch ceremony, that took place at the vice-president's residence, was attended by Shekhar Dutt,

former governor of Chhattisgarh; P K Gupta, chairman and MD of NBCC Ltd; Gireesh Tripathi, director, NTPC School of Business; and A K Mittal, former CMD of NBCC Ltd.

#### VP Venkaiah Naidu releases the book Titled 'Dr V L Dutt: Glimpses of a Pioneer's Life Journey'

- Vice-President M. Venkaiah Naidu released the book Dr. V.L. Dutt - Glimpses of a Pioneer's Life Journey, written by V.L. Indira Dutt.
- About the Book :
- The book is based on the life of Velagapudi Lakshmana Dutt, former Chairman KCP Group.
- BJP national spokesperson Sanju Verma authored a New Book Titled The Modi Gambit: Decoding Modi 2.0
- Economist and BJP national spokesperson **Sanju Verma**, authored a Book Titled **The Modi Gambit : Decoding Modi 2.0**, is a massive book on Prime Minister Narendra Modi and his outstanding body of work.
- The Book is published by Gaurav Book Center Private limited.
- The introduction to the book has been **written by BL Santhosh**, national general secretary (organisation) of the BJP
- Foreword has been written by the erudite Mohandas Pai, while the Afterword is by ace journalist Anand Narasimhan, who summarises the essence of the book.

#### NIF Book Prize 2021 - 'Naoroji: Pioneer of Indian Nationalism' by Dinyar Patel

- A biography titled 'Naoroji: Pioneer of Indian Nationalism' authored by Dinyar Patel selected as the winner of the 4th Kamaladevi Chattopadhyay NIF (New India Foundation) Book Prize 2021.
- This book was published by **Harvard University Press**.
- The book marked the life events and legacy of **Dada Bhai Naoroji**. It also contains historical backgrounds of 19th century India's National Movement.

#### Vice President M Venkaiah Naidu releases the Book 'Raj Kapoor: The Master at Work'

- Vice President of India, M Venkaiah Naidu released the book titled 'Raj Kapoor: The Master At Work' authored by Rahul Rawail.
- This book was published by **Bloomsbury India**.
- The book launched during Raj Kapoor's 97th birth anniversary event which was held at India Habitat Centre in New Delhi.
- The vice president described the book as a "labour of love and dedication".

#### Assam Governor releases book on cancer - 'Principles and Practice of Oncology'

- A book titled 'Principles and Practice of Oncology' released by the Governor of Assam, Jagadish Mukhi.
- The book is based on 'Oncology' – the study of cancer.

## CURRENT AFFAIRS: APPS & SERVICES

### Union Minister Giriraj Singh launches BanAdhikar App & NGDRS

- Union Rural Development Minister Giriraj Singh launched the National Generic Document Registration System (NGDRS) and Banadhikar App.
- Note:
- Tripura is the first state in the country to introduce such a BanAdhikar app.
- The App has been initiated by the Directorate of Land Records, Tripura in collaboration with the North Eastern Space Application Centre and Tripura Space Application Centre.
- Key Features:
- Banadhikar is a GPS-based mobile application for the demarcation of forest 'patta' (land rights) for the landless indigenous people under the **Forest Rights Act**.
- NGDRS will provide land registration services to the citizens.

#### Benefits:

- It will help in reducing the cost and number of visits required for forest patta land demarcation and registration.
- It will also help in solving the majority of land disputes and our indigenous communities will get benefits of all land related govt schemes effectively.
- Under this, **1.3 lakh tribal** people in Tripura, who got **forest lands** under the Banadhikar mobile application, would get a **uniform map of their land**.
- The new schemes, each and every 'patta' land in the state would get a **unique ID** and the registration process would become very easy.

### Indian Army Launches ASIGMA

- On Dec 23, 2021, The **Indian Army** launched a contemporary messaging application named **ASIGMA** (Army Secure IndiGeneous Messaging Application) .
- It is a new generation, state-of-the-art, web-based application developed entirely in-house by a team of officers of the Corps of Signals of the Army.
- The application is being deployed on the Army's internal network as a replacement of **Army Wide Area Network (AWAN)** messaging application which has been in service for the past 15 years.

### EdTech Platform 'Paytm Wealth Academy' launched by Paytm to Train Traders, Investors.

- **Paytm** (online payment platform) launched the first of its kind Artificial Intelligence (AI) powered **Educational Technology (EdTech) platform** named, 'Paytm Wealth academy' for traders and investors.
- Through this educational platform, Paytm will offer courses and webinars on trading and financial

concepts. The courses will be curated as per the need of each individual.

#### Edelweiss General Insurance partners with PhonePe to Offers Digital Motor Insurance

- Edelweiss General Insurance (EGI) & PhonePe, a fintech firm in the digital payments space made a partnership to offer quick and easy, digital motor insurance products to all its customers.
- The partnership offers customers of PhonePe a simple, end to end digital solutions in the motor insurance segment.

### **CURRENT AFFAIRS: SPORTS NEWS**

#### India's Ramkumar Ramanathan wins maiden singles tennis title at ATP Challenger tournament in Bahrain

- Indian tennis player **Ramkumar Ramanathan** won his maiden Challenger level singles title 12 years after turning a Pro, after he **defeated Evgeny Karlovskiy** of the **Russian Tennis Federation** in the **final** of the **ATP Challenger tournament** in **Manama, Bahrain**.
- The inaugural Bahrain Ministry Of Interior Tennis Challenger, played on hard court, was an ATP80 event.
- Ramanathan, a winner of six ATP Challenger doubles titles, pocketed \$7,200 in prize money as well as 80 ATP Ranking points.
- He is likely to be ranked 186 and will surpass Prajnesh Gunneswaran (215) and out-of-action Sumit Nagal (219) when the chart is updated.
- **Nuno Borges and Francisco Cabral** took the **doubles title** after defeating Maximilian Neuchrist of Austria and Michail Pervolarakis from Greece 7-5, 6-7(5), 10-8.

#### Saurav Ghosal becomes the first Indian to win Malaysian Open squash championships

- On Nov 27, 2021, Squash star Saurav Ghosal made history as he became the first Indian to win the Malaysian Open Championships after beating Miguel Rodriguez 11-7, 11-8 and 13-11 in the men's singles final in Kuala Lumpur to win the 2021 Malaysian Open Squash Championships title.
- It was Ghosal's first PSA Tour title in three years.
- He last won a PSA title in the 2018 Kolkata International Open.
- In the **women's single title** of the 2021 Malaysian Open squash championships has been won by **Malaysia's Aifa Azman**.

#### Indian athlete Anju Bobby George wins World Athletics' Woman of the Year award

- Legendary Indian athlete **Anju Bobby George** has been bestowed with the **Woman of the Year Award** by World Athletics for grooming talent in the country and for her advocacy of gender equality.
- Awards & Honours:
- Anju Bobby George received the **Arjuna award** in 2002–2003 for eminent sports persons from the government of India



- She received the country's highest sporting honour, **Rajiv Gandhi Khel Ratna award** in 2003–2004 after her success in the World Athletic meet.
- She was conferred **Padma Shri**, India's fourth highest civilian award in 2004

#### Junior Hockey World Cup: India beat Belgium by 1-0 to enter semi finals

- Defending champions India beat European giants Belgium by a solitary goal 1-0 to progress to the semifinals in the FIH Junior Men's Hockey World Cup at the Kalinga Stadium in Bhubaneswar in odisha.
- Shardananad Tiwari's penalty corner conversion in the 21th minute was enough for India to seal their place in the last four.
- India will take on last edition's bronze medallist Germany in the semifinals on Dec 03, 2021.

#### Ajaz Patel becomes third bowler to take 10 wickets in an innings

- New Zealand's Mumbai-born spinner Ajaz Patel claimed all 10 Indian wickets in the second Test, becoming only the third bowler in cricket history to achieve the feat.
- He achieved the feat against India in the ongoing second Test here at the **Wankhede Stadium, Mumbai**.
- The left-armer spun a web around India's batting order and **bowled 47.5 overs**, conceding **119 runs**.
- Patel is currently playing his 11th Test match for the Kiwis.
- **Earlier, Australia's Jim Laker** was the **first cricketer** to scalp 10 wickets in a Test innings in **1956** and that was followed by **India's Anil Kumble** in **1999** against **Pakistan**.

#### India's Ananya Bansal Wins Silver at Asian Youth Paralympic Games

- India's Ananya Bansal won the country's first silver medal in shot put in the F-20 category at the Asia Youth Paralympic Games in Manama, Bahrain.
- Ananya Bansal is an athlete with an **intellectual impairment**.
- Also, Varsha Sannuthi from India has participated in the 2021 Asia Youth Para Games as the first International Paralympic Committee Trainee Classifier for Intellectual Impairment - Athletics.

#### Saudi Arabian Grand Prix: Lewis Hamilton wins

- Mercedes Driver Lewis Hamilton won the inaugural Saudi Arabian Grand Prix at Jeddah Corniche Circuit, Saudi Arabia.
- He has **eight wins** in the F1 season who ties up with Max Verstappen.
- The Top position shared by Max Verstappen & Lewis Hamilton with 369.5 points each.

#### F1 Saudi Arabian GP 2021:

1. L. Hamilton (D) Mercedes
2. M. Verstappen (M) Red Bull

3. V. Bottas (M) Mercedes
4. E. Ocon (D) Alpine
5. D. Ricciardo (M) McLaren
6. P. Gasly (D) AlphaTauri
7. C. Leclerc (D) Ferrari
8. Carlos Sainz (M) Ferrari
9. A. Giovinazi (D) Alfa Romeo
10. L. Norris (D) McLaren

#### Argentina beat Germany in FIH Men's Junior Hockey World Cup 2021

- On Dec 05, 2021, Argentina defeated six-time winners Germany 4-2 in the FIH Men's junior hockey world cup 2021 final at the Kalinga Stadium in Odisha.
- **Argentina** has become the **only third team** after **Germany (six wins)** and **India (2001, 2016)** to win multiple Junior Hockey WC titles.
- France and the Indian hockey team finished third and fourth, respectively.
- This was Argentina's second title, after their maiden win in 2005.

Award	Player
Player of the tournament	<u>Timothée Clément</u>
Goalkeeper of the tournament	<u>Anton Brinckman</u>
Top goalscorer	<u>Miles Bukkens</u>
Fair play award	Chile

#### PV Sindhu won silver in BWF World Tour Finals 2021

- World number seven Indian shuttler PV Sindhu settled for a silver medal after being defeated by South Korea's an Se-young in the BWF World Tour Finals.
- Se-young defeated Sindhu by 21-16, 21-12 in the final match that lasted for just 39 minutes.
- This was Sindhu's **third** final appearance in the tournament.
- She had won the title in 2018 to become the only Indian to achieve the feat.

**Note:**

- With this victory, **An Seyoung** became the **first-ever South Korean woman** to win the season-ending title.
- It was also her third straight title in Bali, following wins at the Indonesian Masters and Indonesia Open.

**Champions in the BWF World Tour Finals 2021:**

- Men's singles: Viktor Axelsen
- Women's singles: An Se-young
- Men's doubles: Takuro Hoki & Yugo Kobayashi
- Mixed doubles: Dechapol Puavaranukroh & Sapsiree Taerattanachai

**Awards & Honours :**

- Arjuna Award (2013)
- Padma Shri, the fourth highest civilian award of India (2015)
- Major Dhyan Chand Khel Ratna, highest sporting honour of India (2016)
- Padma Bhushan, Third Highest Civilian Award of India (2020).

**2021 Asian team squash championships : Indian Men Win Silver**

- The Indian men's squash team won the silver medal at the 20th Asian Squash Championship in Malaysia.
- Malaysia has won the both men's & women's final in 2-1.

**Note :**

- The last time the Malaysian men's and women's teams won a 'double' was in the 2008 championships in Kuwait.
- This was the **third time** the Indian men's squash team had entered the Asian Squash Championship final after having previously done so in **1981** and **2012**.

**Davis Cup 2021: Russia beat Croatia to win title**

- The **Russian Tennis Federation** has won the **Davis Cup** after beating **Croatia 2-0** in the final in **Madrid** after 15 years.
- It was Medvedev's fifth consecutive straight-set victory at the 2021 Davis Cup.
- Medvedev beat Marin Cilic 7-6 (7), 6-2 in the second singles match.
- Andrey Rublev was named the **Most Valuable Player of the tournament** after going 6-1 in both singles and doubles.
- It was Russia's third Davis cup after 2002 & 2006.

**Note:**

The **Russian team** is officially being called **RTF (Russian Tennis Federation)**.

### ICC Test Rankings 2021: Team India Reclaims Top Spot

- **India** beat **New Zealand** by **372 runs** in the second test at **Mumbai** to win the two-match series 1-0.
- India mopped up the New Zealand lower order within 40 minutes of play on day four at the Wankhede Stadium.
- India has **124** rating points, while New Zealand lost three points and remains with 121 points followed by Australia (108), England (107), Pakistan (92), South Africa (88), Sri Lanka (83), West Indies (75), Bangladesh (49) and Zimbabwe (31).
- **Kohli** became the **first player** with **50 international wins** in each format of the game.

### Commonwealth Weightlifting Championships 2021: Sanket Mahadev Sargar wins gold medal in Men's 55 kg snatch category

- Sanket Mahadev Sargar won the gold medal in the Men's 55kg snatch category at the ongoing Commonwealth Weightlifting Championships 2021 in Tashkent,Uzbekistan.
- He also registered a new snatch national record.
- For the top-podium finish, the Indian lifted the weight of **113kg**.
- He was the Khelo India University Games champion in 2020.
- Meanwhile, **Jhilli Dalabehera** bagged a **silver medal** in **women's 49kg category** at the ongoing 2021 Commonwealth Weightlifting Championships.
- Jhilli Dalabehera lifted a total of **167kg** & she managed a successful 73 kg lift in Snatch while she lifted 94kg in Clean and Jerk to win the yellow metal in the 49kg category at the ongoing weightlifting tournament.

### India wins 41 medals at Asian Youth Para Games

- **Indian para-athletes** won **41 medals** ( **12 gold**, **15 silver**, and **14 bronze medals** ) at the **Asian Youth Para Games** held in Riffa city.
- Over **700 athletes** from around **30 countries** participated in the continental youth showpiece event that took place from December 2 to 6.

Rank	Nation	Gold	Silver	Bronze	Total
1	Iran	44	53	25	122
2	Thailand	33	25	17	75

3	Japan	30	11	14	55
4	South Korea	14	11	22	47
5	India	12	16	13	41
6	Indonesia	12	11	13	36
7	Uzbekistan	11	1	4	16
8	Hong Kong	9	11	12	32
9	Iraq	8	6	13	27
10	Chinese Taipei	5	3	3	11

- The athletes competed across nine sports - Para athletics, Para badminton, boccia, goalball, Para powerlifting, Para swimming, Para table tennis, Para taekwondo, and wheelchair basketball.
- Asian Youth Para Games 2021 Medal Tally and Table:

Medals Won by India At The Asian Youth Para Games:

Medal	Name	Sport	Event	
Gold	Kashish Lakra	Athletics	Women's Club Throw F51	

Gold	Vikas Bhatiwal	Athletics	Men's Discus Throw F46	
Gold	Praveen Kumar	Athletics	Men's High Jump T44	
Gold	Vikram Singh	Athletics	Men's Javelin Throw F46	
Gold	Karandeep Kumar	Athletics	Men's Long Jump T46	
Gold	Meet Tadhani	Athletics	Men's 100 m T13	
Gold	Meet Tadhani	Athletics	Men's 200 m T13	
Gold	Ishan Khandelwal	Athletics	Men's 1500 m T11	
Gold	Sanjana Kumari	Badminton	Women's Singles SL3	
Gold	Nithya Srimurthy Sivan	Badminton	Women's Singles SH6	
Gold	Palak Kohli Sanjana Kumari	Badminton	Women's Doubles SL3-SL4	
Gold	Abhijit Sakhuja Nehal Sakhuja	Badminton	Mixed Doubles SL3-SL4	

Silver	Rahul	Athletics	Men's High Jump T43	
Silver	Siddarth Kahar	Athletics	Men's Javelin Throw F35	
Silver	Praveen Kumar	Athletics	Men's Long Jump T44	
Silver	Darshan Soni	Athletics	Men's Long Jump T47	
Silver	Vikash Bhatiwal	Athletics	Men's Shotput F46	
Silver	Vikash Bhatiwal	Athletics	Women's Shotput F20	
Silver	Maafi	Athletics	Men's 400 m T45	
Silver	Rahul Jograiya	Badminton	Men's Singles SL4	
Silver	Hardik Makkar	Badminton	Men's Singles SU5	
Silver	Jyothi Jyothi	Badminton	Women's Singles SL3	
Silver	Karan Paneer Ruthick Raghupati	Badminton	Men's Singles SU5	



Silver	Jyothi Jyothi with ( Sana Baghrera of <u>Iran</u> )	Badminton	Mixed Doubles SL3-SU5	
Silver	Hardik Makkar Sanajana Kumari	Badminton	Mixed Doubles SL3-SL4	
Silver	Adithya Kuljarni Nithya Sivan	Badminton	Mixed Doubles SH6	
Silver	Devanshi Satlija	Swimming	Women's 100 Breaststroke SB9	
Silver	Rahul Jograiya	Powerlifting	Men's -72 kg	
Bronze	Karthik Krishna	Athletics	Men's Discus Throw F37	
Bronze	Laxit	Athletics	Men's Javelin Throw F54	
Bronze	Laxit	Athletics	Men's Shotput F54	
Bronze	Sanajay R Neelam	Athletics	Men's Shotput F11	
Bronze	Medha Jayant	Athletics	Women's Shotput F32-33	

Bronze	Darshan Soni	Athletics	Men's 100 m T47	
Bronze	Biju Bennett George	Athletics	Men's 400 m T46	
Bronze	Palak Kohli	Badminton	Women's Singles SU5	
Bronze	Hardik Thakkar Naveen Sivakumar	Badminton	Men's Doubles SU5	
Bronze	Santhiyan  Vishwanathan with ( Mekanboev Shabnam of Tajikistan )	Badminton	Women's Doubles SL3-SU5	
Bronze	Nehal Gupta Palak Kohli	Badminton	Mixed Doubles SL3-SU5	
Bronze	Devanshi Satlija	Swimming	Women's 100 Butterfly S9	
Bronze	Devanshi Satlija	Swimming	Women's 100 m Freestyle S9	

#### About Asian Youth Para Games 2021:

- The 2021 Asian Youth Para Games also known as the **4th Asian Youth Para Games** is the 4th edition of multi-sport events for Asian athletes with different abilities held in Manama, Bahrain.

#### Norway's Magnus Carlsen wins FIDE world chess championship

- On Dec 10, 2021, Reigning world chess champion **Magnus Carlsen of Norway** defended his title and won

the **FIDE World Championship in Dubai, UAE.**

- With this Carlsen clinched his **fifth world championship title.**
- He won the title 7.5-3.5 against Ian Nepomniachtchi of Russia.

#### **Red Bull's Max Verstappen wins Abu Dhabi Grand Prix 2021**

- Red Bull's Max Verstappen defeated Mercedes' Lewis Hamilton to win his maiden F1 world championship title in the Abu Dhabi Grand Prix at the Yas Marina Circuit in Abu Dhabi, United Arab Emirates.
- Ferrari's Carlos Sainz finished the race in third place, with AlphaTauri's Yuki Tsunoda fourth and team mate Pierre Gasly fifth.
- With Verstappen's win, he won the first Formula One World Drivers' Championship of his career. Mercedes won their eighth consecutive Formula One World Constructor Championship, setting a new record.

#### **J&K's Chandeeep Singh bags a silver medal at Para World Taekwondo Championships**

- 23-year-old Chandeeep Singh, an International Para Taekwondo Athlete bagged a silver medal in Men's plus 80 kg event at 9th Para World Taekwondo Championships held at Istanbul, Turkey from December 9 to 12 2021.
- Chandeeep Singh became the first Para Athlete from the Union Territory of Jammu and Kashmir (J&K) to achieve such a feat at the World level & this also is India's first-ever medal in the history of the Para World Taekwondo Championships.
- He has been trained under Taekwondo Coach in Jammu and Kashmir Sports Council, Atul Pangotra.
- Competitors from around 50 countries have competed in the event for the title.

#### **Olympian Arvind Singh wins gold in Asian Rowing C'ship**

- Indian rower Arvind Singh won the gold medal beating his opponents with a time of 7:55.942 in the men's lightweight single sculls at the Asian Rowing Championships 2021 in Thailand.
- India ended the competition with two gold and four silver medals.
- India bagged silver medals in Men's Lightweight Double Sculls, Men's Quadrapul Sculls and in Men's Coxless Four.
- India's Ashish Pugat and Sukhjinder Singh took the silver medal in Lightweight Men's Double Sculls with times of 7:12.568 and 7.
- India's Bittu, Jakar Khan and Manjeet Kumar won silver in the Men's Quadruple Sculls race.
- In Men's Coxless Fours final, India's Jasveer Singh, Punit Kumar, Gurmeet Singh and Charanjeet Singh won the silver by clocking 6:51.661.

- In the 2019 edition of the Asian Rowing Championships, India won five medals - one gold, two silver, and two bronze.

#### David Warner And Hayley Matthews Win The ICC Player Of The Month Award For November 2021

- The International Cricket Council (ICC) has announced Australia opener David Warner and West Indies all-rounder Hayley Matthews were voted the ICC Players of the Month for November 2021.

#### Sports Minister Anurag Thakur launches 1st edition of Khelo India Women's U-21 Hockey League

- On Dec 15, 2021, Union Minister for Youth Affairs and Sports Anurag Singh Thakur inaugurated the first edition of Khelo India U21 Women's Hockey League at the iconic Major Dhyan Chand National Stadium in New Delhi.
- The hockey tournament is slated to be held from **December 15 to 21** & it is **Organized** by the **Sports Authority of India** in collaboration with **Hockey India**.
- As many as 14 teams will be competing in 42 matches during the first phase of the tournament, Meanwhile the second and third phase will be held in early 2022.
- The league holds a cash prize of Rs 30 lakh for the winners - 15 lakh from the Ministry of Youth Affairs and Sports and 15 lakh from Hockey India.

#### Olympics India inducts 148 athletes in first list of TOPS athletes for 2024 Games

- The central government has identified a total of 148 athletes, including 20 new inductees, in seven Olympic disciplines and six Paralympic disciplines for support under the Target Olympic Podium Scheme (TOPS) at a meeting of the Mission Olympic Cell of the Ministry of Youth Affairs and Sports.
- The MOC approved lists in Cycling, Sailing, Shooting, Swimming, Table Tennis, Weightlifting and Wrestling as well as Para Sports (Archery, Athletics, Badminton, Shooting, Swimming, Table Tennis).
- Archery, Athletics, Badminton, Boxing, Equestrian, Fencing, Golf, Gymnastics, Judo, Rowing and Tennis athletes list will be announced soon.

#### Commonwealth Weightlifting Championships: Purnima Pandey bags gold, Gurdeep wins bronze

- India ended the Commonwealth championships with 16 medals - four gold, seven silver, and five bronze in Tashkent, Uzbekistan.
- The country had sent 19 representatives in different categories to compete in 2021.
- In World Weightlifting Championships 2021 S Bindyarani Devi won the Gold in clean and jerk event in 55kg.

#### Gold Medal Winners :

- Men - Jeremy Lalrinnunga (67kg), Achinta Sheuli (73kg), Ajay Singh (81kg)
- Women - Purnima Pandey (+87kg)

- Silver Medal Winners :
- Men - Guru Raja (61kg), Lovepreet Singh (109kg)
- Women - Jhili Dalabehera (49kg), S Bindyarani Devi (55kg), Hazarika Popy (59kg), Harjinder Kaur (71kg), Punam Yadav (76kg)
- Bronze Medal Winners :
- Men - Vikas Thakur (96kg), Gurdeep Singh (+109kg)
- Women - Lalchhanhimi (71kg), R Arockiya Alish (76kg), Anuradha Pavunraj (87kg)
- The four Commonwealth gold medallists - Jeremy Lalrinnunga, Achinta Sheuli, Ajay Singh, Purnima Pandey - have qualified directly for the 2022 Games in Birmingham.
- The 22-year-old **Purnima Pandey** became the first Indian woman from this edition to qualify directly for the **2022 Commonwealth Games in Birmingham**.

#### India's Hansini Mathan Rajan wins 2021 ITTF Hopes and Challenge tournament

- India's Hansini Mathan Rajan defeated Syria's Hend Zaza, the youngest athlete of this year's Tokyo Olympics, to win the girls singles event at the 2021 ITTF Hopes and Challenge table tennis tournament in Amman.
- Playing in the U-12 category, the reigning cadet national champion outplayed Zaza 11-6, 11-8, 6-11, 11-6 in the final.
- Parth Prabhakar was India's entry in the boys singles event which was won by Iran's Komeil Niknejad Divshali.
- In October 2021, The **Chennai**-based Hansini had also secured her second ITTF World Youth Series title with a win in the U-13 girls category in Muscat.
- She won her maiden Youth Series title in Tunisia in September 2021.

#### Badminton World Federation rankings: Kidambi Srikanth returns to the top 10 & Viktor Axelsen Tops

- India's Kidambi Srikanth moved up 4 spots to enter top 10 places in the latest Badminton World Federation (BWF) rankings.
- In the **2021 BWF World Championship** he won the **silver medal** & became only the fourth ever Indian to win a medal at the BWF World Championships after Sen (2021), HS Prannoy (2019) and Prakash Padukone (1983).
- **Young Lakshya Sen**, who also secured a maiden bronze at World Championship in his first campaign at the event, jumped two spots to the **17th** position but **B Sai Praneeth** slipped two places to be at the **18th** spot.

- H S Prannoy's quarter final finish in Spain saw him improve six places to the 26th spot.

#### BWF Rankings :

Rank	Country	Player	Points	Tournaments
1	Denmark	Viktor Axelsen	116779	32
2	Japan	Kento Momota	112210	22
3	Denmark	Anders Antonsen	98300	32
4	Chinese Taipei	Chou Tien Chen	92682	34
5	Indonesia	Anthony Sinisuka Ginting	87567	29
6	China	Chen Long	84400	18
7	Malaysia	Lee Zii Jia	78860	35
8	Indonesia	Jonatan	77647	29
9	Hong Kong	NG Ka Long Angus	69370	31
10	India	Kidambi Srikanth	69158	35

#### Asian Champions Trophy 2021: India clinches bronze in men's hockey team

- Indian men's hockey team won the bronze medal at Asian Champions Trophy 2021 after beating Pakistan 4-3 in a third-place play-off match.
- **South Korea** won their **first Asian Champions Trophy** title by defeating Japan 4-2.
- **Goal-strikers from India-** Harmanpreet Singh, Sumit, Varun Kumar, Akashdeep Singh
- **Goal-strikers from Pakistan-** Arfraz, Abdul Rana, Ahmed Nadeem

#### BWF World Championship 2021 : Loh Kean Yew becomes Singapore's first badminton world champion

- Loh Kean Yew has become Singapore's first ever badminton world champion at the BWF 2021 World Championships after beating India's Kidambi Srikanth 21-15, 22-20 in Huelva, Spain.

#### BWF 2021 World Championships Medal Winners :

Category	Gold	Silver	Bronze
Men's Singles	Loh Kean Yew (Singapore)	Srikanth Kidambi (India)	Lakshya Sen (India)  Anders Antonsen (Denmark)
Women's Singles	Akane Yamaguchi (Japan)	Tai – Tzu Ying (Chinese Taipei)	He Bingjiao (China)  Zhang Yiman (China)
Men's Doubles	Takuro Hoki & Yugo Kobayashi (Japan)	He Jiting & Tan Qiang (China)	Ong Yew Sin & Teo Ee Yi  Kim Astrup & Anders Rasmussen
Women's Doubles	Chen Qingchen & Jia Yifan (China)	Lee So-hee & Shin Seung- Chan (South Korea)	Mayu Matsumoto & Wakana Nagahara  Kim So-yeong & Kong Hee-yong
Mixed Doubles	Dechapol Puavaranukroh & Sapsiree Taerattanachai (Thailand)	Yuta Watanabe & Arisa Higashino (Japan)	Kyohei Yamashita & Naru Shinoya  Tang Chun Man & Tse Ying Suet

#### SAFF U-19 Women's Football Championship 2021: Bangladesh defeat India

- Bangladesh women team has won the SAFF U 19 Women's Championship defeated India by 1-0.
- Shaheda Akter Ripa of Bangladesh scored the maximum number of goals ( 5 goals) in the tournament &



she received the 'most valuable player' award.

**Note :**

- Five countries ( Bangladesh, India, Sri Lanka, Nepal, Bhutan ) have participated in the 2021 SAFF U-19 Women's Championship.
- The **Pakistan Football Federation** was **suspended** by FIFA in April 2021 so it didn't participate in this competition.

**Anahat Singh becomes first Indian girl to win Jr Squash Open in US**

- 13-year-old girl Anahat Singh from Delhi became the first Indian to win the prestigious US Junior Squash Open at the Arlen Spectre Centre in Philadelphia.
- Anahat won the title in the Under-15 category, beating Jayda Marei from Egypt 11-9, 11-5, 8-11, 11-5.
- The World's biggest junior Squash tournament attracted more than 850 junior Squash players from 41 different countries.

**Veteran Spinner Harbhajan Singh Announces Retirement From All Forms of Cricket**

- Veteran India spinner Harbhajan Singh announced his retirement from all forms of cricket.
- Awards & Honors :
- Singh was conferred the Padma Shri, India's fourth highest civilian honor, in 2009.

**Pankaj Advani wins 11th National Billiards title**

- **Ace cueist Pankaj Advani** successfully defended his national billiards title after defeating PSPB teammate **Dhruv Sitwala 5-2** in a best of nine games final in **Bhopal, Madhya Pradesh**.
- This was Advani's 11th national senior billiards title and his 35th title overall.

**Awards & Honors :**

- Arjuna Award in 2004
- Major Dhyan Chand Khel Ratna, India's highest sporting honour, 2005–06
- Padma Shri in 2009
- Padma Bhushan, India's third highest civilian honour, 2018

**FIS Alpine Skiing Competition 2021 : Ace Indian skier Aanchal Thakur wins Bronze medal**

- Indian skier Aanchal Thakur won the bronze medal in the giant slalom category at a Federation Internationale de Ski (FIS) meet held at Kolasin, Montenegro.
- She finished 3rd with an overall timing of 1:54:30. Georgia Epiphaniou, who won the Silver medal.
- Croatia's Dora Ljutic (1:50.61) won the gold medal while Cyprus skier Georgia Epiphaniou (1:52.71) clinched silver.

**Note :**

With this, **Aanchal** has become the **first Indian Ski athlete to win two medals at international level.**

#### **WADA restores India's National Dope Testing Laboratory (NDTL) accreditation**

- The World Anti-Doping Agency (WADA) has restored the accreditation of the National Dope Testing Laboratory (NDTL), which had been suspended since August 2019.
- The Restoration of accreditation is a boost to India's efforts to achieve the highest global standards of excellence in sport.
- The suspension prohibited the Delhi-based NDTL from carrying out anti-doping activities, including all analysis of urine and blood samples.

#### **Note :**

- The WADA first suspended NDTL in August 2019 for six months and extended the de-recognition period after its inspections showed that non-conformities still existed.
- The National Anti-Doping Bill 2021, introduced in the Parliament on 17 December 2021, is another step in India's quest to become a sporting powerhouse.
- **India** is currently **third** in the WADA's global list of dope violators, led by Russia.

#### **Himachal Pradesh wins Vijay Hazare Trophy**

- Himachal Pradesh beat Tamil Nadu by 11 runs to clinch their maiden Vijay Hazare Trophy title at the Sawai Mansingh Stadium in Jaipur.
- Himachal Pradesh skipper Rishi Dhawan won the toss and put Dinesh Karthik-led Tamil Nadu to bat.
- Tamil Nadu had set a target of 315 runs in front of Himachal Pradesh in the final. Himachal had scored 299 for four in 47.3 overs. After this, due to bad light, the umpires gave the result of the match by VJD rule (V Jayadevan rule).
- Youngster Shubham Arora came out all guns blazing with his maiden List A century as Himachal downed five-time champions TamilNadu under the VJD method to win their first ever domestic one-day championship.
- Tamil Nadu have been the best domestic side in the country in white-ball cricket since the 2019-20 season.

#### **Nitesh Kumar wins gold as 4th Para-Badminton National Championship**

- World No. 7 Nitesh Kumar doubled his gold tally at the 4th Para-Badminton National Championship, which concluded in Bhubaneswar, Odisha.
- Haryana's Nitesh along with his partner Tarun defeated World No. 1 Paralympic Games gold medallist Pramod Bhagat and Manoj Sarkar in straight sets 21-19, 21-11 in the Men's doubles finals to win the gold.
- Earlier Nitesh also won the gold medal in the Men's singles category.

- World No 1 SL3 Para-Badminton player Parul Parmar from Gujarat also secured gold while Mandeep Kaur from Uttarakhand won Silver and Mansi won bronze.

#### **In Women Wheelchair 1 category:**

- Alpha James from Kerala - Gold
- Neerja Goyal from Uttarakhand - Silver
- Nirmala Mehta from Uttarakhand and Ranjeeta Maurya from Uttar Pradesh - Bronze.

#### **In Women Wheelchair 2 category :**

- Ammu Mohan from Karnataka - gold
- Shabana from Punjab - Silver
- Prema Biswas and Suman Rawat - bronze.

#### **In Women SU5 category :**

- Manisha from Tamil Nadu - Gold
- Arti - Silver
- Jyoti and Vaishali - Bronze medal.

#### **In Women SL4 category :**

- Jyoti from Haryana - Gold
- Chiranjita - Silver
- Kanak - Bronze.

#### **In Women SH6 category :**

- Nitya Sre from Tamil Nadu - Gold,
- Rhui - Silver
- Sasikala and Rachana - Bronze.

#### **Moyuka Uchijima wins ITF W25 Pune title**

- Japanese tennis player Moyuka Uchijima beat fourth seed Diana Marcinkevica of Latvia 6-2, 7-5 in the singles final of the 20th edition of the NECC Deccan \$25,000 Women's ITF Championships.
- It was the fourth title in the professional circuit for Moyuka, and third of the season.
- The champion collected 65 WTA points and \$3,935, and the runner-up won 40 points and \$2,107.
- In the **doubles final**, top seeds **Anna Danilina and Valeriya Strakhova** prevailed 6-0, 2-6, 10-5 against the Japanese pair of Funa Kozaki and Misaki Matsuda.
- The doubles champion team got \$1,437 and the runner-up \$719.

#### **Uttar Pradesh crowned 11th Hockey India junior national championship**

- In Hockey, Uttar Pradesh were crowned the winners of the 11th Junior National Men's Championship

following a 3-1 victory over Chandigarh in the final at Kovilpatti, Tamil Nadu

- Tournament top-scorer Sharda Nand Tiwari opened the scoring for Uttar Pradesh.
- In the 3rd/4th place playoff match, Odisha edged out Haryana 3-2 in a closely contested affair to clinch the third place in the competition.

#### Messi wins Ballon d'Or for seventh time and Putellas crowned women's winner.

- **Argentina's Lionel Messi** who plays as a forward for **Paris Saint-Germain** has won the Ballon d'Or award or Golden Ball Award for the **7th time**.
- Barcelona's Alexia Putellas has won the Women's Ballon d'Or award or Ballon d'Or Féminin Award. This is Alexia's first Ballon d'Or Award.
- The 2021 Ballon d'Or ceremony was held in Théâtre du Châtelet, Paris, France.
- This year 2021 marks the **65 edition** of the Ballon d'Or Ceremony.

#### **Winners List:**

Award	Winner
Men's Ballon d'Or	Lionel Messi(Argentina) Paris Saint-Germain
Women's Ballon d'Or	Alexia Putellas(Spain) Barcelona
Striker of the year	Robert Lewandowski(Poland) Bayern Munich
Club of the year	Chelsea FC
Yachine Trophy	Gianluigi Donnarumma(Italy) Paris Saint-Germain
Kopa Trophy	Pedri (Pedro Gonzalez Lopez)(Spain) Barcelona

### **CURRENT AFFAIRS: OBITUARIES**

#### **National Award-Winning Choreographer K Sivasankar Passes away**

- On Nov 28, 2021, National Award-winning choreographer & actor **Sivasankar** Passed away at the age of 72.
- Awards & Honours:
- He won the **Tamil Nadu State Film Award** under the Best Choreographer category in 1996, 2003, 2006 and 2008, for the films Poove Unakkaga, Vishwa Thulasi, Varalaru and Uliyin Osai respectively.
- He also won the **National Award** in 2008 for his work in the **SS Rajamouli directorial Magadheera**, and gained wide popularity for the song **Dheera Dheera Dheera** from the film.

#### **Founder of Williams Racing F1 team, Sir Frank Williams Passes away**

- On Nov 28, 2021, The founder and former chief of the Williams Formula One team , Sir Frank Williams Passed away at the age of 79.

#### Renowned Telugu lyricist Sirivennela Sitarama Sastry passes away

- On Nov 30, 2021, Renowned Telugu lyricist 'Sirivennela' Seetharama Sastry passed away at the age of 66.
- Awards & Honours:
- In January 2012, he was honored with a Lifetime achievement award.
- Seetharama Sastry won accolades and innumerable awards that include **11 Nandi awards** given by the government of Andhra Pradesh and **four Filmfare awards**.
- In 2019, he was awarded the **Padma Shri**, the fourth-highest civilian award in India, for his contributions towards the field of arts and aesthetics.

#### Renowned scholar Rafiqul Islam passes away

- Renowned scholar and national professor of Bangladesh Professor Rafiqul Islam passed away at the age of 87.

#### About Rafiqul Islam:

- Rafiqul Islam was a Bangladeshi educationist, scholar, writer and cultural activist.
- Prof. Rafiqul Islam was one of the greatest scholars on the national poet of Bangladesh Kazi Nazrul Islam.
- He was inducted as a National Professor by the Government of Bangladesh in July 2018.
- He was the **President** of the **Bangla Academy** from May 2021 until his death.
- He served as the chairman of the Nazrul Institute Trustee Board.
- Islam wrote 30 books on the language, literature, history and culture of Bangladesh.

#### Awards & Honours:

- He was honoured with Swadhinta Padak and the Ekushey padak, which is the highest civilian award of Bangladesh.
- He was a recipient of the Bangla Academy Literary Award.
- In 2021, he received International Mother Language Award

#### Former AP CM Konijeti Rosaiah passes away

- **Former Chief Minister of Undivided Andhra Pradesh, Konijeti Rosaiah** passed away at the age of 88.

#### Political History:

- 1968-85 Member, Andhra Pradesh Legislative Council
- 1979-83 Minister, Roads and Buildings, Housing, Transport and Home, Andhra Pradesh
- 1989-94 Member, Andhra Pradesh Legislative Assembly and Minister, Finance and Transport, Andhra Pradesh

Pradesh

- 1992-93 Leader of House, Andhra Pradesh Legislative Assembly
- 1998 Elected to 12th Lok Sabha
- He became an MP from Narasaraopet Lok Sabha in 1998, after serving as the APCC president from 1995 to 1997.
- 1998-99 Member, Committee on Industry and Member, Library Committee and Member, Consultative Committee, Ministry of Information and Broadcasting.
- His contribution to the state as its **longest serving finance minister** is well recognized.
- He had presented a **budget 16 times** in AP assembly (undivided).
- He served as the 15th chief minister of erstwhile united AP from September 3, 2009 to November 25, 2010.
- In the 2009 elections, he won from the Chirala assembly constituency and became the finance minister in the YSR cabinet.
- He had also served as the **Governor of Tamil Nadu** from 2011 to 2016 and **Karnataka** (additional charge) for two months in 2014.

#### Veteran Indian Journalist Vinod Dua Passes Away

- On Dec 04, 2021, **Vinod Dua**, a **veteran journalist** and **father of comedian Mallika Dua**, passed away on Saturday at the age of 67.

#### Sarada Menon, India's First Woman Psychiatrist Passes away

- On Dec 05, 2021, **India's first woman psychiatrist** and the **longest-serving head of the Institute of Mental Health, Sarada Menon** passed away at the age of 98.

#### The Chief Justice of India proposed creation of a National Judicial Infrastructure Authority of India (NJIAI):

- Chief Justice of India N V Ramana pressed for establishing a new body to improve judicial infrastructure.
- The government has received a proposal from him to set up the **National Judicial Infrastructure Authority of India (NJIAI)**
- According to the proposal, there will be a governing body with CJI as patron-in-chief, the other salient features in the proposal are that **NJIAI will act as a central body in laying down the roadmap for planning, creation, development, maintenance and management of functional infrastructure for the Indian court system, besides, identical structures under all the (25) high courts**
- The scheme is being implemented **since 1993-94**. Till date, the central government has sanctioned Rs 8709.77 crore under the scheme to states and UTs.
- The scheme has been extended from time to time. Under the scheme, funds are released by the central

government for construction of court buildings and residential accommodations for judicial officers of district and subordinate judiciary.

- The government has extended the scheme for a further period of five years from **April 1, 2021**.

#### **MSDE launches ASEEM portal to help skilled people:**

- In an endeavour to improve the information flow and bridge the demand-supply gap in the skilled workforce market, the Ministry of Skill Development and Entrepreneurship (MSDE) has launched 'Aatmanirbhar Skilled Employee Employer Mapping (ASEEM)' portal to help skilled people find sustainable livelihood opportunities.
- Apart from recruiting a skilled workforce that spurs business competitiveness and economic growth, the Artificial Intelligence-based platform has been envisioned to strengthen their career pathways by handholding them through their journeys to attain industry-relevant skills and explore emerging job opportunities especially in the post COVID era.

#### **Benefits of ASEEM portal:**

- Envisaging the **rapidly changing nature of work** and how it impacts the workforce is crucial in restructuring the skilling ecosystem with the new normal settling post-pandemic.
- It will provide real-time granular information by identifying relevant skilling requirements and employment prospects.

#### **Features:**

- The portal consists of three IT based interfaces
- **Employer Portal** – Employer onboarding, Demand Aggregation, candidate selection
- **Dashboard** – Reports, Trends, analytics, and highlight gaps
- **Candidate Application** – Create & Track candidate profile, share job suggestion
- **For workers/candidates** : The portal and App will have provision for registration and data upload for workers across job roles, sectors and geographies. The skilled workforce can register their profiles on the app and can search for employment opportunities in their neighbourhood.
- **Employers** : Through ASEEM, employers, agencies and job aggregators looking for skilled workforce in specific sectors will also have the required details at their fingertips.
- **Policy makers** : It will also enable policymakers take more objective view of various sectors.

#### **Olaf Scholz to be nominated as Germany's next Chancellor by Parliament:**

- In Germany, Social Democratic Party of Germany leader Olaf Scholz will be nominated as the country's next Chancellor by Parliament, bringing the curtain down on Angela Merkel's 16-year reign.
- Olaf Scholz has cleared the final hurdle on his path to majority after Green Party members approved their



coalition deal with his Social Democrats, SPD, and the Free Democrats, FDP.

- Now the three parties have approved the coalition deal, this political grouping will be sworn in tomorrow and the era of Angela Merkel will officially give way to a new age under Social Democrat Scholz.
- While support of at least 369 lawmakers is required in the 736-seat lower house to take up the top job, the three coalition partners have 416 seats together, giving them a comfortable majority in the house.
- Germany's environmentalist Green party, 86 per cent of about 71,000 members who voted backed the 177-page coalition accord, which includes an ambitious climate agenda and plans to upgrade Germany's technology infrastructure.
- The **coalition aims to modernize Europe's biggest economy**, tackling surge in COVID-19 infections, step up efforts against climate change and introduce more liberal social policies.

#### CDS General Bipin Rawat passes away

- On Dec 08, 2021, the country's most senior serving soldier, **India's first Chief of Defence Staff (CDS) General Bipin Rawat**, passed away in the IAF Mi-17V5 helicopter crash near Coonoor in Tamil Nadu.
- He was 63.
- He was among the 14 people (13 have been confirmed dead) who were on board, including his wife Madhulika Rawat and members of his personal staff on an Indian Air Force Mil Mi-17 helicopter.
- He was on a visit to the Defence Services Staff College in Wellington, Tamil Nadu to address the faculty and the students' officers of the Staff Course.
- The sole survivor is Group Captain Varun Singh, directing staff at Defence Services Staff College (DSSC).

#### World's Oldest Test Cricketer Eileen Ash Passes away

- **Former England cricketer Eileen Ash**, the **world's oldest Test cricketer** described as a 'pioneer' of the sport, Passed away at the age of 110.

#### Note:

- In 2011, Ash became the **first female test cricketer** to live to 100 years old.

#### Padma Shri Awardee Nanda Kishore Prusty passes away

- On Dec 07, 2021, **Noted Educationist and Padma Shri awardee Nanda Kishore Prusty** passed away at the age of 104.

#### Awards & Honours:

- He was awarded **Padma Shri 2021** under the "Literature and Education" category by President Ram Nath Kovind in November 2021.

#### Serum Institute's executive director Dr Suresh Jadhav passes away

- On Dec 08, 2021, **Serum Institute of India (SII) Executive Director Dr. Suresh Jadhav** passed away at the age of 72.

#### Author of gothic novels, **Anne Rice Passes away**

- **American gothic-fiction writer Anne Rice**, best known for **The Vampire Chronicles novel** series, passed away at the age of 80.

#### Former Union Minister **RL Jalappa Passes away**

- On Dec 17, 2021, **Veteran Congress leader and former Union Minister R.L. Jalappa** passed away at the age of 96.

#### Former SC Judge Justice **GT Nanavati Passes away**

- **Former Supreme Court judge Justice Girish Thakorlal Nanavati**, who investigated the **1984 anti-Sikh** and the **2002 Godhra riots**, passed away at the age of 87.

#### Pritzker Prize-winning architect **Richard Rogers Passes away**

- **Richard Rogers, a British-Italian Pritzker Prize-winning architect** passed away.

#### Awards & Honors :

- Rogers was knighted in 1991 by Queen Elizabeth II.
- He received the Pritzker Prize, in 2007.
- He received the praemium imperiale prize for architecture in 2000.
- He was also awarded the Royal Gold Medal in 1985 and the American Institute of Architect's Gold Medal in 2019.

#### Renowned Malayalam film director **KS Sethumadhavan passes away**

- On Dec 24, 2021, **Legendary filmmaker KS Sethumadhavan** passed away at the age of 90.
- Awards & Honors :
- He won numerous awards including **ten (National Film Awards and nine Kerala State Film Awards** including Four for Best Direction.
- His film **Achanum Bappayum** had won the **Nargis Dutt Award** for best film on national integration in 1973.
- He received J C Daniel Award, the Kerala government's highest honor in the film industry, in 2009.
- In 2011, he was honored with the Chalachitra Ratnam Award by the Kerala Film Critics Association.

#### South Africa's Nobel Peace winner **Desmond Tutu Passes away**

- On Dec 26, 2021, Human rights activist & the South Africa's Nobel Peace winner **Archbishop Desmond Tutu** Passed away at the age of 90.
- Awards & Honors :
- Desmond Tutu won the **Nobel Peace Prize in 1984** in recognition of his non-violent opposition against the

rule by the white minority in the country.

- In 2012, Tutu was awarded a \$1 million grant by the Mo Ibrahim Foundation for "his lifelong commitment to speaking truth to power."

#### Former Greek President Karolos Papoulias Passes away

On Dec 26, 2021 **Former President of Greece Karolos Papoulias** Passed away at the age of 92.

#### He-Man' artist and toy designer T. Mark Taylor Passes away

- **Artist and toy designer** for the **He-Man** and the **Masters of the Universe franchise** as well as the Teenage Mutant Ninja Turtles, **T. Mark Taylor** Passed away at the age of 80.
- He-man was the muscled frontman for toy manufacturer Mattel's Masters of the Universe franchise, & it was the epitome of hulking superhero warrior but also became an icon within the LGBTQ+ community.

#### Seven-term Rajya Sabha MP Mahendra Prasad passes away

- **Rajya Sabha MP from the Janata Dal(United)** and **industrialist Mahendra Prasad** Passed away at the age of 81.

#### Former England Test Captain Ray Illingworth passes away

- **Former England cricketer Ray Illingworth** passed away at the age of 89.

#### Scientist E.O. Wilson, dubbed modern-day Darwin Passes away

- **Edward O. Wilson**, a **US naturalist** dubbed the "modern-day Darwin" Passed away at the age of 92.