

December - 24

## TNPSC BITS

- ❖ Saudi Arabia has banned the Tablighi Jamaat.
  - Tablighi Jamaat is an Islamist proselytizing movement.
- ❖ Voters in the French island territory of New Caledonia in the southwest Pacific Ocean chose to stay part of France.
  - This was concluded in a referendum boycotted by pro-independence forces and closely watched around the South Pacific.
- ❖ The proposal from New Zealand's health officials would effectively ban anyone 14 years or younger from purchasing cigarettes for their entire lifetime.
  - It would raise the minimum age to buy cigarettes every year beginning in 2023.
- ❖ Nicaragua breaks diplomatic ties with Taiwan in favor of China.
  - China claims Taiwan as part of its territory awaiting reunification.
- ❖ IndiGo has signed an agreement with Dehradun-based Council of Scientific and Industrial Research-Indian Institute of Petroleum.
  - This is to manufacture and deploy sustainable aviation fuel globally.

## NATIONAL

### Convoke 2021-22



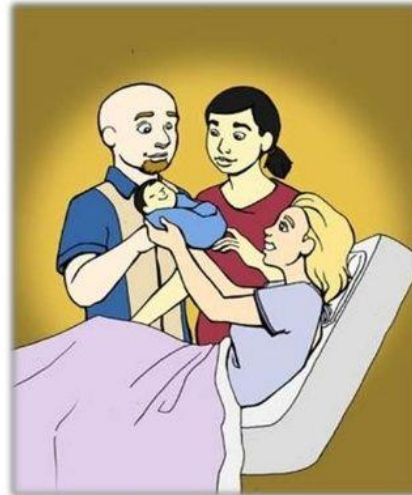
- ❖ NITI Aayog in partnership with Bharti Foundation, the philanthropic arm of Bharti Enterprises, launched Convoke 2021-22.
- ❖ Convoke is a National research Symposium that aims at addressing challenges in imparting education and strengthening its quality with a special focus on all teachers, educationists,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

- ❖ Through Convoke they can now share their micro research papers.
- ❖ These research papers will be analysed by a panel of Educationists.
- ❖ The shortlisted Research Papers will be presented during the 'National Research Symposium' scheduled in January 2022.

## **Surrogacy (Regulation) Bill, 2019**

### What is Surrogacy?

- ❖ It is an effective method to treat infertility.
- ❖ In this method another woman carries the child in her womb for nine months and gives birth to it.
- ❖ It can be called as an arrangement between the intended parents and the surrogate mother.



- ❖ The Parliament passed this bill recently.
- ❖ The bill aims to constitute a National Surrogacy Board and state surrogacy boards and appoint appropriate authorities for regulation of the practice and process of surrogacy.
- ❖ According to this, only Indian couples who have been legally married for at least five years will be allowed to opt for surrogacy.
- ❖ The bill seeks to “allow ethical altruistic surrogacy to the intending infertile Indian married couple between the age of 23-50 years and 26-55 years for female and male, respectively”.

## **Oil & gas block auctions**

- ❖ The Ministry of Petroleum and Natural Gas has launched the seventh bid round under the Open Acreage Licensing Programme (OALP).
- ❖ These include five on land blocks, two shallow-water blocks, and one ultra-deep-water block.

- ❖ Since 2016, five rounds of OALP have been concluded for 105 Exploration and Production (E&P) blocks

## ON OFFER

Location	Name of block	Area (sq km)
Eastern offshore	CY-UDWHP-2021/1	8,108.69
Assam	AS-ONHP-2021/2	2,445.30
Assam	AS-ONHP-2021/3	1,840.87
Western offshore	CB-OSHP-2021/2	1,234.42
Madhya Pradesh	SR-ONHP-2021/1	906.43
Rajasthan	RJ-ONHP-2021/1	486.39
Tripura	AA-ONHP-2021/2	382.05
Western offshore	CB-OSHP-2021/3	361.85
	<b>Total</b>	<b>15,766</b>

Source: Ministry of Petroleum and Natural Gas

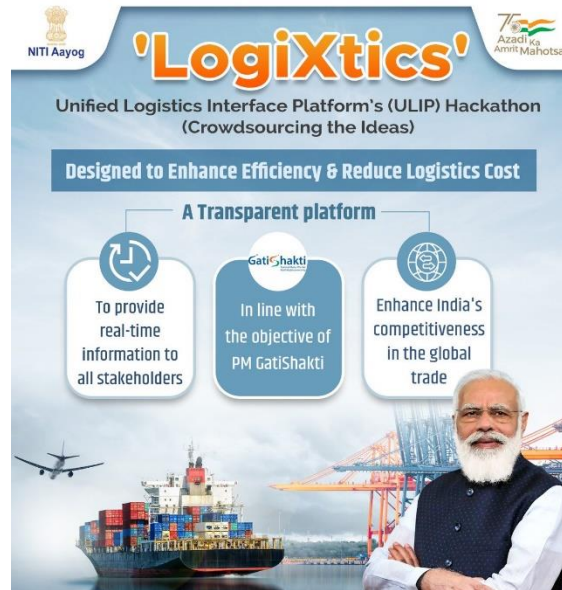
## India-Central Asia Dialogue



- ❖ The External Affairs Minister S Jaishankar hosted the 3rd meeting of the India-Central Asia Dialogue in New Delhi.
- ❖ The Foreign Ministers of Kazakhstan, Kyrgyz Republic, Tajikistan, Turkmenistan, and Uzbekistan participated in this.
- ❖ Their previous meeting was organized by India in October 2020 via video conference.

- ❖ Three of these five, Turkmenistan, Uzbekistan, and Tajikistan, share a border with Afghanistan.

## LogiXtics



- ❖ The Department for Promotion of Industry and Internal Trade has launched the Unified Logistics Interface Platform's (ULIP) hackathon – 'LogiXtics'.
- ❖ This is to crowdsource more ideas that will benefit the logistics industry.
- ❖ The Unified Logistics Interface Platform (ULIP) Hackathon – LogiXtics is being organized by NITI Aayog and Atal Innovation Mission.
- ❖ ULIP has been designed to enhance efficiency and reduce logistics costs in India by creating a transparent platform that can provide real-time information to all stakeholders.
- ❖ The cost of logistics in India is about 14% which is higher than in other countries in the world.
- ❖ National Industrial Corridor Development Corporation was mandated by NITI Aayog in January 2021 to develop ULIP.

## Finn's weaver bird

- ❖ The Finn's weaver bird, numbering less than 500 in India is primarily found in Terai grasslands, in Uttarakhand and western Uttar Pradesh, apart from a few pockets in Assam.

- ❖ The Finn's weaver (*Ploceus megarhynchus*), listed as "vulnerable" in the International Union for Conservation of Nature's (IUCN) Red List has been up listed to the "endangered" category.



## **INTERNATIONAL**

### **Queen of Asia**

- ❖ Sri Lanka's National gem and Jewellery Authority has said that the world's largest corundum, blue sapphire has been found in Ratnapura in Sri Lanka.
- ❖ It weighs around 310 kg.
- ❖ This rare gemstone had been found three months ago from a gem in Ratnapura.
- ❖ The blue sapphire which has been discovered as a single crystal has been named Queen of Asia.



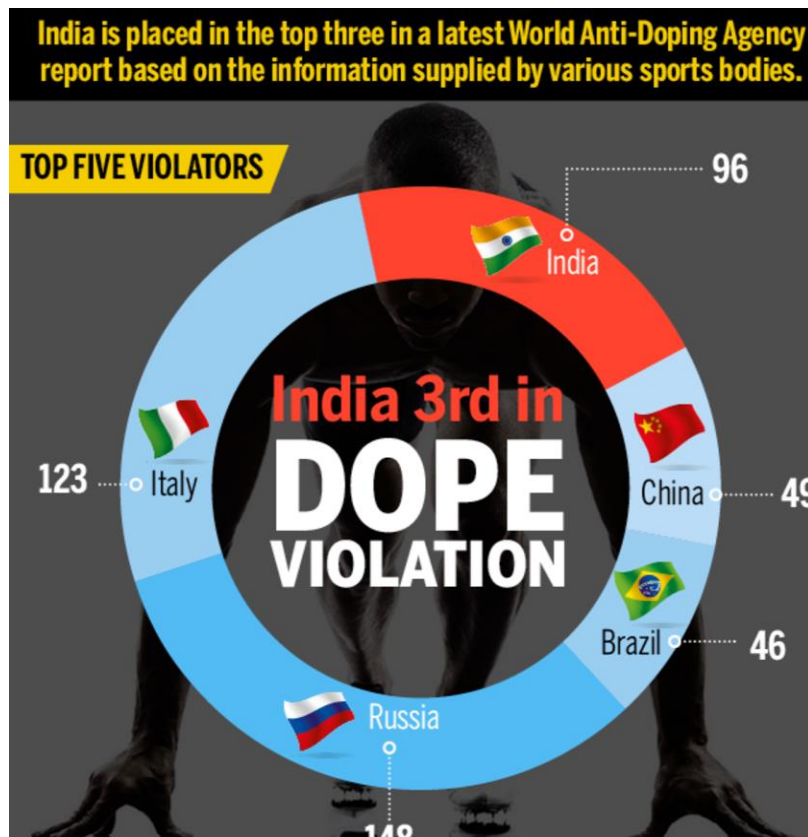
### **Zero Covid Policy**

- ❖ Hong Kong implemented its new 'Zero Covid Policy'.
- ❖ This strategy has led to the toughest quarantine and testing measures worldwide.
- ❖ This policy has kept infections low.

- ❖ Hong Kong is a city and special administrative region of China.
- ❖ It is located on the eastern Pearl River Delta in South China.

### **World Anti-Doping Agency Report**

- ❖ The World Anti-Doping Agency (WADA) published its report on “Rule Violations”, recently.
- ❖ The number of offenders in India and increased in 2019, making India among the top three of the world’s biggest doping violators.
- ❖ India stands behind Russia and Italy.



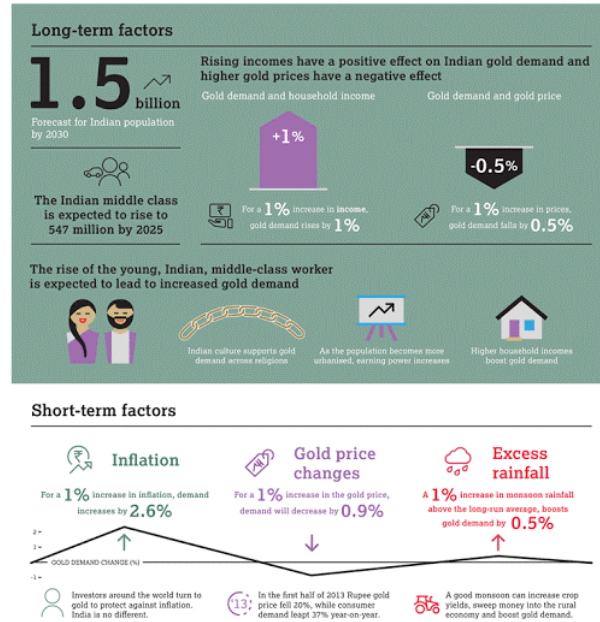
## **ECONOMY**

### **World Gold Council's 'Bullion Trade-in India' report**

- ❖ Imports made up 86% of India’s gold supply between 2016-2020.
- ❖ The inbound shipments continue to grow despite high import duty.
- ❖ In 2020, India imported 377 tonnes of gold bars from more than 30 countries.

- ❖ Out of this 55% came from just two countries - Switzerland (44%) and the UAE (11%).

**Factors affecting Indian gold demand**



**ENVIRONMENT**

**Study on coral reefs**



- ❖ Most of the coral reefs in the western Indian Ocean face a high risk of extinction in the next 50 years due to global warming and overfishing, as per a new study.

- ❖ The study conducted by a group of researchers claims that coral reefs from Seychelles to South Africa might become functionally extinct by 2070.
- ❖ The study was published in the journal - Nature Sustainability.

## STATES

### Punjab - state festival

- ❖ The Chief Minister of Punjab, Charanjit Singh Channi has declared Lord Krishna Balram Jagannath Rath Yatra as an annual state festival.
- ❖ The announcement for the same was made during flagging off the 25th Shri Lord Krishna Balram Jagannath Rath Yatra.

## PERSONALITIES, AWARDS, AND EVENTS

### Alimihan Seyiti

- ❖ China's oldest person, Alimihan Seyiti, has died at the age of 135 in Xinjiang Uygur Autonomous Region.
- ❖ Hailing from Komuxerik township of Shule County in Kashgar Prefecture, Seyiti was born on June 25, 1886.
- ❖ In 2013, she topped the list of China's oldest living persons.
- ❖ Komuxerik is known as a "longevity town," with many elderly aged above 90.



### Cate Blanchett

- ❖ Oscar winner Cate Blanchett will be felicitated with French cinema's top honour, the Cesar d'Honneur.
- ❖ Blanchett will receive the Cesar d'Honneur, a lifetime achievement award, in Paris on February 25, 2022.



- ❖ Blanchett won her first Oscar for Martin Scorsese's 'The Aviator', in which she played the role of late screen icon Katharine Hepburn.
- ❖ She earned her second Oscar trophy for Woody Allen's 2013 feature film 'Blue Jasmine'.

